

M I S C E L L A N I E S

P H I L O S O P H I C A L,

L I T E R A R Y,

H I S T O R I C A L, &c.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LAST GENEVA EDITION OF

M. D E V O L T A I R E,

By J. P E R R Y, M. A.

V O L. I.

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REVISED FROM THE LAST GERMAN EDITION OF

MR. DE VOLTARE

MR. PERRY, M.A.



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Page 19, For the Lyar, read the Liar.

123, For Answer to M. Murmontel, read Answer of M. Marmontel.

384, For Maroc, read Merocca.

CRITICAL ESSAYS*

ON THE

DRAMATICAL WORKS

OF

MR. PETER CORNEILLE;

ON THE MEDEA, 1635.

WE begin this Review with the *Medea*, because, in that poem, we may discover the first ray of those great beauties, which shine forth, with so much splendor, in his future works. In another place, we rejected the first six comedies, in which there is scarcely a trait to be found of the talents of Corneille.

I confess it is, to this day, a matter of doubt, whether or not he ever wrote any other tragedy but the *MEDEA*. He was then included among the five Authors, whom the Cardinal de Richlieu employed, to compose the dialogue of those pieces, the plots and incidents of which, he himself invented. Those five authors were, as it is said, L'Etoile, son to the Grand-Usher, of whom we have the Memoirs. Boisrobert, Abbé du Chatillon, upon Seine, almoner to the king and counsellor of state; Colletet, who is only known to us, by the satires of Boileau, but whom the Cardinal regarded with esteem; Rotrou, civil-lieutenant of the Bailiwick de Dreux, a man of genius; and Corneille himself, who was subordinate to the others, inasmuch as they re-

* These Essays were prefixed to a Quarto Edition of Corneille's Works by M. de Voltaire. They have never been before translated into English.

spectively possessed a greater share of fortune, or of favour.

He soon, however, retired from this society, under the pretence of settling his little patrimony, which, he said, required his presence at Rouen. Rotrou never before this produced any thing, that approached even to mediocrity, for he did not bring forth his *Venceslas* till the year 1649, fourteen years after the *Medea*, and when Corneille, who was wont to call him father, had become his master. Reanimated by the genius of Corneille, he was rendered even capable of standing the trial of comparison with him, in the first scene, and the fourth act of this piece, which was, however, only an imitation of the Spanish Author, *Francesco de Roxas*.

But, in 1635, the time in which the *Medea* of Corneille was first performed, there was not a single piece that was supportable, in some respects, save the *Sophonisbe* of Mairet, that came out in 1633. It is remarkable that both in Italy, and in France, true tragedy owed its birth to the same *Sophonisbe*. The prelate Trissino, author of the Italian piece of that name, had the superiority, by writing in a language already fixed, and perfect. Mairet, on the contrary, wrote in the time, when the French tongue combated the attacks of barbarism and ignorance. We trace nothing before this time but feeble imitations of the Greek and Spanish tragedies, or the most puerile originals, such as the *Innocente Infidélité* of Rotrou; the *Hospital des Fous* by a writer named, Beys; the *Cleomedon* of Durier—The *Orante* of Scuderi, and the *Pèlerine Amoureuse*. These were the pieces that were performed in the year 1635, a little before the *Medea* of Corneille.

With what a slow pace do works of art travel towards perfection! We have, before this period, more than a thousand dramatic pieces, not one of which would be tolerated, perhaps, at this day, by the rabble of the most illiterate province. It is the same through all the arts, and in every thing which requires the approbation of society, or concerns the conveniencies of life. Let any

any nation but recur to her particular history, and she will find, that, after the fall of the Roman empire, she remained, nearly, in a state of savage ignorance, for ten or twelve centuries.

The *Medea* of Corneille had but a moderate run of success, although it was so very much superior to every thing that had appeared upon the stage before. A piece may abound with the most flagrant errors, provided it is animated with a lively passion, and rendered interesting throughout, as is the *Cid*; but tedious and lukewarm declamations never succeeded in any country, nor at any time. The *Medea* of Seneca never met with success among the Romans, for this very reason; nor did the *Medea* of Corneille, which had the same fault, continue long in possession of the stage.

They do not represent, at this time, any other *Medea* at Paris, than that of Longuepierre, a piece the most indifferent, and where the fault of the Greeks, which was vain declamation, is pushed to an excess. But when a fascinating actress gives strength to the part of *Medea*, this piece goes off with some éclat in the representation, though it is scarcely supportable in the closet.

Those tragedies, built altogether on fable, and where every incident was incredible, daily lost their reputation among us, after that Corneille had accustomed us to truth; and, it must be confessed, that a man of sense, who has been to hear the consultations of Augustus, of Cinna, and of Maximus, must, with great pain, endure a *Medea* traversing the air in her chariot drawn by dragons. There is another very great fault in the tragedy of *Medea*. We are not interested in favour of any of the characters. *Medea* is a wicked woman, who revengeth herself on a dishonest man. We condemn, at this day, the manner in which Corneille hath treated this subject, and daily more and more, do we revolt against the manner, even of Euripides and Seneca.

A magician does not appear to us a proper character for a regular tragedy, nor agreeable to a people whose taste is perfect. They ask us why we condemn magi-

cians, and at the same time permit our tragedians, not only to speak of ghosts and phantoms, but even, at times, to introduce the former on the stage.

It certainly seems to admit the return of magicians into the world, by introducing them on the stage. And, if the theatre is to be preserved as the pure mirror of truth, it is necessary to banish, equally, apparitions and magic.

I believe the reason why we admit the apparition of death, and not the flight of a magician through the air, is this. It is possible that the divinity may suffer ghosts to appear, to astonish the world by such extraordinary miracles, and for awakening the consciences of men; but it is impossible that magicians can have it in their power, to violate the eternal laws of providence and order. Such are the ideas that we entertain at this day.

A prodigy, wrought by heaven itself, must be universally believed; but a miracle performed by a forcerer in spite of heaven, can please none but the vulgar.

Quodcumque ostendis mihi sic incredulus odi.

With the Greeks as well as with the Romans, who gave permission to the marvellous, *Medea* might have been a very eligible subject. In the present day, we have confined it to the opera, which among us is the empire of fable, and possesses almost the same place in the theatre, that the *Orlando Furioso* possesses in the Epic Poem.

But when *Medea*, no longer a sorceress, becomes almost in cold blood, the parricide of her two infants, to revenge herself on her husband; and Jason, on his part, is instigated by envy to murder the same infants, to revenge himself on his wife; they form a group of horrible monsters, the exhibition of which can only be sanctified by custom in so far as such had possessed the stage, in the pitiful frippery of verse, that mingled the tragic with the comic, from the beginning of the seventeenth century on all the theatres of Europe. Nevertheless, this
piece

piece is a *Chef d'œuvre*, when compared with almost all those that preceded it. It is, as M. de Fontenelle, calls it "to take wing and mount towards the most sublime." And in truth he had reason to say so, on comparing *Medea* with the six hundred pieces of Hardy, each of which was written in two or three days; to the tragedies of Garnier; to the *Amours Infortunées de Leandre et de Hero* by the advocate La Selve; to the *Fidelle Tromperie* by another advocate named Gougenot; or of the *Pirandre* of Boisrobert, that was performed the year before the *Medea*.

We have before remarked, that all the other branches of literature were as little cultivated at this time.

Corneille was thirty years old when he brought out his *Medea*, an age at which the genius is in its vigour, but he was as yet controuled by the spirit of the times in which he lived. This is not his first tragedy. He had brought out *Clitandre* three years before, which is built entirely on the model of the Spanish and the English theatre; where it is usual to see the dramatic personæ fight upon the stage, kill and assassinate one another; their heroines drawing the sword; their guards pursuing their murderers, and their women disguised in breeches. In one of their plays, a lady thrusts out one of her lovers eyes with a bodkin. It is there where they spin out romances to the size of ten volumes, and that, of the most cold and tedious stuff in nature. Good sense and nature neglected, and the violation of all rules of composition seem with them but trifling errors in comparison to the *listless*, which they abhor. The tragedies of Shakespeare possess more of the monstrous even than *Clitandre*, but they are at the same time full of spirit. He fails, however, in every attempt he makes to imitate the ancients, and the *Medea* is the first piece in which we find the smallest trait of the antique. This imitation is, without doubt, much inferior to the true beauties, which Corneille afterwards produced from the source of his own genius and peculiar stile.

CRITICAL ESSAYS ON

To wind up an illustrious and an interesting event in the space of two or three hours; to permit no character to appear but where he ought; to leave no void upon the stage; to form a natural and an engaging plot; not to say any thing useless; to instruct the understanding and to move the heart; to be at all times eloquent in the measure of the poetry, and yet to adapt the eloquence to every particular character in the drama; to speak in a language as pure and chaste as the most elegant and correct prose, without permitting the constraint of rhyme to affect the sentiment, and never to admit of one rhyme hard, obscure or declamatory. These are the qualities and conditions that we require now-a-days in the composition of a tragedy, to make it descend to posterity with the approbation of true critics, without which there can be no true reputation.

We shall see in how much the following pieces of Peter Corneille are replete with these ingredients.

I content myself with pointing out in this piece of *Medea*, the imitations of Seneca; and some of the verses which announce to the world, as they possess a somewhat of the grand Corneille. I shall enter more on detail, when we come to the pieces in which almost all the verses require our particular attention.

ON THE C I D.

WHEN Corneille brought out his *Cid*, the Spaniards had, on all the theatres of Europe, the same influence which they had in public affairs. Their taste governed as much as their politics; and even in Italy, their comedies or rather their tragicomedies obtained the preference with a nation who possessed, and who could boast of the Amintor, and the Pastor fido; who had been the first to cultivate the arts,
and

and who appeared much more likely to give laws to literature, than to receive them.

In all these Spanish tragedies there were always some scenes of buffoonery. The same fault infected the English stage. There is scarce a tragedy of Shakespear, where we do not find the pleasantries of the clown mixed with the sublime of the hero. To what can we attribute a stile so extravagant and disgraceful to the human mind, but to the custom that prevailed among princes, of entertaining buffoons in their household? A custom worthy indeed of barbarians, who were unacquainted with, and incapable of enjoying the pleasures of the mind, but which hath descended even to our time, sensible as we are of its absurdity. This vice never disgraced the French theatre. It slipped indeed into our first operas, which not being regular works, were not to appearance defiled by the indecency; but the elegant Quinault soon purged even the opera of the adulteration.

Be it as it may, a man at that time piqued himself on knowing Spanish; as in the present day, it is common to boast of the accomplishment of speaking French. It was the language of the courts of Vienna, Bavaria, Brussels, Naples, and Milan; the league was extended to France, and the marriage of Louis XIII with the daughter of Philip III, made the Spanish tongue so much in request, that it was almost a disgrace to men of letters to be ignorant of it. The greatest part of our comedies were drawn from the theatre of Madrid.

A secretary of the queen Mary de Medecis, named Chalons, retiring to Rouen in his old age, persuaded Corneille to learn Spanish, and proposed to him at once the subject of the *Cid*. The Spaniards have two tragedies of the *Cid*. The one of Diamante, entitled "El honrador de su padre" which is the most ancient; and the other, of "Guilan de Castro," which was most in vogue. We see in both these, a childish lover in the *Cid*, and a buffoon called "The graceful Valet," two personages highly ridiculous; but the generous and tender sentiments which the pencil of Corneille

hath most happily thrown into their features, make them original characters.

I could not avoid discovering the *Cid* of Diamante, when I gave the first edition of my commentaries on Corneille. I shall point out in this the principal parts which he has translated from that Spanish author.

It is a circumstance, in my opinion, truly remarkable, that after the restoration of letters in Europe, and after the theatre was improved, there was nothing produced truly affecting on the stage, or that drew from us the tribute of a single tear, if we except some pathetic scenes of the *Pastorido*, and the Spanish *Cid*. The Italian pieces of the sixteenth century are full of good declamation, on the model of the Greek, but the declamations do not touch the heart. The Spanish productions were composed of incredible adventures, and the English had adopted the same taste.

They had not yet learned to speak to the heart in any nation. Five or six situations truly affecting, but obscured by a cloud of irregularities, in the piece of Guilain de Castro, were discovered by Corneille, as we discover a bye path, buried beneath brambles and thorns.

He made out of the Spanish *Cid*, a tragedy, more regular and not less pathetic. The subject is the marriage of Rodrigue and Chimene. This marriage is a point of history as nearly accomplished in Spain, as that of Andromache with Pyrrhus was in Greece; and it is on the similar situation, that a great part of the interest of the piece depends. The authenticity of the plot renders the catastrophe tolerable, which must have been otherways, had it been built on fiction. And the love of Chimene, which would have been shameful, if it had not begun till after the death of her father, becomes as affecting as it is excusable, in so much as she secretly loved Rodrigue before his death, and was sanctified therein by his approbation.

Before

Before the *Cid* of Corneille, we knew nothing of this conflict of the passions that tears the heart, and, compared to which, all the other beauties of art are lifeless and insipid. We knew what success the *Cid* had, and what enthusiasm it produced in the nation; nor are we unacquainted with the attacks and the opposition that Corneille was exposed to.

He was, as we have said, one of the five authors who laboured for the Cardinal de Richlieu.—Those five authors were Rotrou, L'Etoile, Colletet, Boisrobert, and Corneille, admitted the last into the society. He never met with the friendship, or the esteem of either of them but Rotrou, who had sense enough to distinguish his merit. The others never even did him common justice. Scuderi wrote against him with the gall of humbled jealousy, and yet with the tone of conscious superiority. One Clavoret, who had written a comedy, intitled, *La Place Royale*, on the same subject with a former one of Corneille, loaded him with the most coarse invectives. Mairet even disgraced himself so far, as to write against him with the same spleen. But what most afflicted him, and went near to deprive France of the excellent productions with which he afterwards enriched it, was to see the Cardinal, his protector, place himself, with vehemence, at the head of his enemies.

The Cardinal, towards the end of 1635, a year before the *Cid* was brought out, had a piece exhibited in the cardinal's palace, now the royal palace, called *La Comedie des Tbuilleries*, of which he had himself arranged all the scenes. Corneille, more submissive to the dictates of his own genius, than to the voice even of a prime minister, thought it his duty to change somewhat in the third act, which was assigned to him. This becoming freedom was misrepresented by two of his associates, and communicated with much exaggeration to the Cardinal; who told Corneille in consequence thereof, "that *he* must fail who had a genius in his train," meaning thereby to praise the submission which blindly obeys the orders of a superior. This anecdote was well known

known among the last princes of the house of Vendosme; the young son of Cæsar de Vendosme having assisted in the representation of the piece.

The minister, therefore, saw the faults of the *Cid* with the eyes of a man prejudiced against the author, and who was, at the same time, blind to the beauties. He was so remarkably obstinate in his opinion of it, that when one brought him the first strictures of the academy on the piece, and when he saw that the academy, with the most polished delicacy, for the cultivation of the arts, and the encouragement of the grand Corneille, had compared the present contests to those on the *Jerusalem*, and the *Pastor Fido*, on their first production, inserted a marginal note with his own hand, "The applause and the condemnation of the *Cid*, is confined, on either part, to the learned and the ignorant; whereas the contest on the other two pieces, was among men of sense on both sides."

If it is permitted to me to hazard a conjecture, I believe that the Cardinal de Richlieu had reason for his judgment of the piece, perceiving only its irregularities. The inutility and the impropriety of the part of the infant, the feeble character of the king, and the still more feeble one of Don Sancho, with some other faults, which his great judgment clearly discovered, render him, in my eyes, excusable for his opinion.

I do not know if it was possible for a man engaged in the contending interests of Europe, in the factions of France, and in the intricacies of court intrigue; a court torn and divided by ingratitude, and armed by resentments, to feel the beauties of the scenes between Rodrigue and Chimene. He saw indeed that Rodrigue possessed the greatest share of confidence, in going off with his mistress, after he had slain her father; and being so much shocked at seeing two persons together, whom we think ought to be farthest apart, we do not much regard, nor can we be moved by what they say.

I am, therefore, persuaded that the Cardinal de Richlieu really thought as he spoke of this piece. We must remark, beside, that this great man, who wished that

the

the Academy had absolutely damned the *Cid*, yet continued his favour to the author. Corneille had the unhappy advantage, two years after, in assisting in the *Aveugle de Smyrne*, a tragi-comedy, written by the five authors, the outlines of which were the production of the prime minister.

There is one scene of intrigue in this piece, which, as the author of the plot had before condemned Chimene for an amour that usurped against her duty, it was believed was not advised by the Cardinal de Richlieu, and it was observed that he was more indulgent towards Colletet, who had introduced that scene, than he had been to Corneille for the same fault.

As to the judgment of the Academy, which they were obliged to pronounce between Corneille and Scuderi, and which was modestly intitled *The Sentiments of the Academy upon the Cid*, I am bold to say, there was never any thing conducted with more true generosity, politeness, and prudence, and never an opinion formed with juster taste. Nothing could be nobler than to do justice to the beauties of the *Cid*, against the decided will of the first man in the kingdom. The delicacy with which they animadverted on the faults, is equal to the *Cid* itself in stile; and they had the very great and prudent art, so to conduct themselves, that neither the Cardinal nor Corneille, nor even Scuderi, could find any just reason for complaint.

I shall take the liberty to make some remarks on the judgement of the Academy, as well as on the piece; but I believe it is my duty to confine myself to one remark alone. It is on these words of the Academy, "The subject of the *Cid* is not a good one." I believe the Academy had reference to the marriage, or rather to the promise of marriage between the murderer and the daughter of the deceased. They considered it as a good subject for a moral piece only, where virtue was rewarded. This confession of the learned body satisfied the opposition at that time, and the Cardinal de Richlieu, who considered the subject as defective. But the Academy did not pretend that the subject was un-

uninteresting or untragical; and when we fancy that the marriage is on the point of celebration, we cannot avoid applauding Corneille for converting the marriage into a simple promise on the part of Rodrigue to espouse Chimene. It appears to me, that Corneille attended more to the decorums of the drama, than they, who were not acquainted with the history, imagined.

The conduct of the academy, composed of men of letters, on this occasion, is so much the more remarkable, as they treated almost all authors with the utmost violence. It is curious to see in what manner he is treated by his enemies, in a letter under the name of Ariste.

"A futile genius who, wishing to appear great to every one, renders himself ridiculous to all the world; and who, the most ungrateful of men, never acknowledges the obligations he is under to Seneca, and to Guillan de Castro, from one of whom he borrows his *Cid*, and from the other his *Medea*. He forbears, in the mean time, to speak of his other pieces, that might well indeed pass for farces, and of which the very names make the most wise and serious laugh. He has produced a *Melise*, a *la galerie du Palais*, and a *La place Royale*; to which we hope that by and by, the famous Mondory will add the *Cimetiere de St. Jean*, the *Samaritaine*, and the *Place aux Veaux**. The pitiful humour of this author, and the vulgarity of his ideas," &c.

We may see from this specimen of more than a hundred pamphlets that were written against Corneille, that at that time, as well as now, there were a certain number of men, whom the merit of others rendered so furious, that they lost both their reason and their decency. It is a species of rage which infects little authors, and above all, those who are destitute of education. In a

* It is true that these comedies of Corneille are very bad, but it is no less true that they are superior to all that were written before his time in France.

copy of verses against him, Guilan de Castro is made to speak in the following manner :

Borne aloft on my pinions, thou jackass of asses,
Pretend not to fly any more to Parnassus.—
Ingrate! do, return me my *Cid* every sentence,
And learn, as thou sit'st on the stool of repentance,
That the genius most vain, is at all times, the lowest,
And to me, all thy fame, and thy splendor thou owest.

Mairet, the author of *Sophonisbe*, who had, at least, the honour of producing the first regular piece which we had in France, seems to have lost this honour, by writing the most odious personalities against Corneille. It must be owned that Corneille replied to his enemies with great severity. The quarrel between him and Mairet proceeded even to such a length, that the Cardinal de Richlieu interfered between them. The following is the letter which he ordered the Abbé de Boisrobert to write to Mairet.

Charonne, October 5, 1637.

“ YOU will please to consider my letter as an order
“ that I send you by the command of his eminence.
“ I will not conceal from you that he has read, with ex-
“ treme pleasure, all that has been written on the sub-
“ ject of the *Cid*; and particularly a letter which he
“ has seen of your's, and which hath so pleased him,
“ that he has had the greatest desire to see all the rest.
“ He has been highly diverted with the agreeable con-
“ tests of genius, and the innocent railleries on both
“ sides. But, when he considers, that, from this con-
“ test, there have arisen endless injuries, outrages, and
“ threats, he has, at last, taken the resolution to put
“ a stop to it. For this effect, although he has not
“ seen the libel which you attribute to M. de Corneille,
“ presupposing from your answer, which I read to him
“ last night, that he has been the aggressor; he has
“ commanded me to remonstrate with him on the in-
“ jury he has done, and to prevent him from making
“ any further reply, unless he wishes to displease his
“ benefactor:

“ benefactor. But, moreover, fearing that the invectives thrown out on his part, may instigate you or
 “ some of your friends, to carry your resentment to a
 “ length that would produce ruinous suits to the one
 “ or the other; he commands me to write to you, that
 “ if you desire to have the continuance of his favour,
 “ you must throw all your injuries behind you; and
 “ only think of your former friendship, which I have
 “ it in charge to see renewed when you all assemble at
 “ my house in Paris. So far I have spoken with the
 “ mouth of his eminence; but to speak ingenuously
 “ what I, for my own part, think of your proceedings,
 “ I am of opinion, that you have sufficiently mortified and punished the vanity of the pitiful Corneille,
 “ and that his feeble defences do not require a combatant so strong and forcible as yourself. One of
 “ these days you shall see his *Cid* pretty well handled
 “ by the sentiments of the academy.”

The academy, however, did not realize the hopes of Boissier. We may plainly see, by this letter, that the Cardinal de Richlieu wished to humble Corneille; and yet, as prime minister, could not permit a literary dispute to degenerate to a personal quarrel.

To wash away from France the reproach that strangers may throw upon her, by saying, that the *Cid* drew upon its author only injuries and disgrace, I shall join here, part of a letter, which the celebrated Balzac wrote to Scuderi, in answer to the critique of the *Cid*, which he had sent him.

“ Consider, nevertheless, Sir, that all France hath
 “ adopted his cause, and that there is not one, perhaps,
 “ of the judges, with whom you are associated, who
 “ does not applaud what you desire him to condemn;
 “ so that even if your arguments should become invincible, and your adversary should submit, he will
 “ gloriously console himself on the loss of his process,
 “ and have it in his power to tell you, it is better to
 “ have given satisfaction to a whole kingdom, than to
 “ have written a regular piece. There is not an architect of Italy, who does not discover faults in the
 structure

“ structure of Fontainbleau, and who does not call it
“ a monster of stone. This monster, however, is an
“ excellent palace for our kings, and the court where
“ they lodge commodiously. There are in it perfect
“ beauties, which are effaced, perhaps, by other beau-
“ ties, that have more of the agreeable, and less of the
“ perfect: and as the acquired is not so grand as the
“ natural, nor the labour of man so noble as the gifts
“ of heaven, so may we say, that, to know the art to
“ please, is not so excellent as the knowledge of pleasing
“ without art. Aristotle blamed “ the flower of Aga-
“ then although he said it was agreeable; and Oedi-
“ pus, perhaps, did not relish it though Aristotle ap-
“ proved. If it is true, that the satisfaction of the
“ spectators is the principal end which the Poets pro-
“ pose to themselves in these exhibitions, and which,
“ even the masters of composition have dignified with
“ the appellation of Cæsar to the people; the *Cid* of
“ the French poet having pleased as well as the Flower
“ of the Greek poet, is it not evident that he has gain-
“ ed the end of the representation, and that he has ar-
“ rived at the goal he had in view, though it be not in
“ the road of Aristotle, nor agreeable to the rules he
“ has designed for poetry. But you say, Sir, that he
“ has dazzled the eyes of the world, and you charge
“ him with using charms and enchantments: I know
“ many authors, who would take pride in such an ac-
“ cusation; and you have confessed to me yourself,
“ that if magic was permitted on the stage, it would
“ be a very excellent advantage. It would, indeed, be
“ noble, to have the power of creating innocent pro-
“ digies; to make the sun appear at night; to pre-
“ pare a feast without viands or dishes; to change the
“ leaves of an oak into guineas, and glass into dia-
“ monds. It is for this that you reproach the author
“ of the *Cid*, and, while you declare that he has vio-
“ lated the rules of art, he forces you to acknowledge
“ that he possesses a secret that succeeds better than the
“ art itself; and, not denying but that it has cheated
“ both the court and people into applause, do not he-
“ sitate

“ sitate to conclude, that it is not at least more cunning than the court and people, and that a cheat which extends itself to so many, deserves rather the name of a conquest, than a fraud.

“ This being the case, Sir, I do not think the members of the Academy will meet with any great difficulty in giving judgment on your process, nor that, on the one side, your arguments will be any great stumbling-block in their way, nor, on the other, the approbation of the public be a prejudice. I shall feel for you, if, while on the consultation on this point, I have not the good fortune to find your decree sanctified by the records of antiquity. There has been a judgment pronounced, and it has been extant for more than fifteen hundred years, by a philosopher of the stoic sect, but a philosopher whose austerity was not incompetent with mirth, and of whom we have now remaining several plays and tragedies; who lived beneath the reign of an emperor who was both a poet and a comedian, and in the age of poetry and music. Mark the judgment which he gives on this subject. I leave it for you to interpret it to the ladies, for whom you have undertaken a more tedious, and a more difficult translation:—
Illud multum est, primo aspectu oculos occupasse, etiamsi contemplatio diligens inventura est quod arguat. Si me interrogas, major ille est, qui judicium abstulit quam qui meruit. Your opponent will find his accompt in the favourable expression of *major est*, and you will find as much as you desire, not desiring any thing, in my opinion, but to prove that he *judicium abstulit*. So that you will be successful in the closet, and he upon the stage. If the *Cid* is culpable, it is a crime which he has well repaid; if he is punished, it will be after he has triumphed. If Plato was banished from the republic, he was, even in the instant of his banishment, crowned with laurel, and treated no otherways than Homer had been before. If Aristotle did find any thing to envy in his conduct, he ought, however, to have permitted him to enjoy his good fortune,

" tune, and not condemn a design which the success
 " had justified. You ought to use your advantage with
 " good-nature: you know that we frequently soften the
 " rigour of the law, and that equity preserves what
 " justice might ruin. Do not insist on this exact and
 " rigorous justice; do not be governed with such scru-
 " pulous nicety, by the tyrant custom. Whoever
 " would wish to give satisfaction, and pleasure, by the
 " regularity which you prescribe, must needs build
 " a better world than the present; he must throw a
 " new face on nature, and go to search for ideas above
 " the heavens. I speak, Sir, against my interest; for if
 " you should esteem my letter severe or unworthy your
 " attention, I may be in danger of losing your good
 " graces, dear as they are to me, and that I am, with
 " esteem, Sir,
 " Your," &c.

It is thus that Balzac, retired from the world, and
 more impartial than the rest, wrote to his friend
 Scuderi and dared to tell him the truth. High flown
 as he was in his letters, he had both learning and taste,
 was a good judge of the beauties of poetry, and intro-
 duced himself into France the eloquence of prose. He
 did justice to the merits of the *Cid*, and the above tes-
 timony redounded to his own, as much as it did to the
 honour of Corneille.

ON THE HORATII, 1641.

IF we reproach Corneille for having stolen, from the
 Spanish, the most affecting, and pathetic beauties of
 the *Cid*, we ought to give him praise for having in-
 troduced, into the French theatre, in his Horatii, the
 most eloquent passages of Titus Livius; and for hav-
 ing, at the same time, improved upon them. We
 know, that when he was threatened with a second
 critique on the tragedy of the Horatii, like that on the

Cid, he answered, " Horace was condemned by the " Duumvirs, but he was absolved by the people." The *Horatii* is not, however, altogether a regular tragedy, but we find in it beauties of a superior nature.

ON CINNA.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

THIS is not a piece like the *Horatii*. We plainly discover the same pencil, but the ordonnance of the picture is much superior: there is no double action; there are no independent, distinct, and divided interests: the acts fall into, and are followed naturally, by one another; there is a regular progression of the same intrigue: the three unities are as perfectly preserved, as they can be, without the action being straitened, or the vigour of the poet impaired. It is altogether a piece of art where the workmanship is concealed.

This is the *Chef d'œuvre* of the great Corneille. He published it along with the chapter of Seneca, the philosopher, from which he drew the subject (in the same manner as he had before published the *Cid*, with the Spanish verses which he had translated.) There is also prefixed his epistle dedicatory to Montauron, treasurer of the exchequer, and the letter of the celebrated Balzac.

POLYEUCTES, 1643.

WHEN we pass from Cinna, to Polyuctes, we find ourselves in a world altogether different. But great poets, like great painters, know how to treat all subjects. It is a circumstance well known, that Corneille had the tragedy of Polyuctes first played at the house of Madame de Rambouillet, where the most cultivated geniuses were wont to assemble. This piece was

was condemned there with an unanimous voice, in spite of the interest which the author had in the house. Voiture was deputed, by all the assembly, to engage Corneille not to represent this work. It is difficult to discover the motives, that could induce men, of the greatest taste and understanding, to judge so singularly. Were they of opinion that a martyr could not succeed in the theatre? they knew not the people if they thought so. Did they believe, that the errors, which their sagacity discovered, would prevail on the public to condemn it? It was by falling into the same error that the enemies of the *Cid* were deceived. They examined the *Cid* by the rules of strict reason, and they found it a piece capable of examination only by sentiment. Could they not discover the very singular beauties of the parts of Severus and Paulina? These beauties, of a kind so new and so delicate, alarmed them perhaps. They were afraid, that a female, who loved, at the same time, her gallant, and her husband, could not be an interesting character; and yet it was, in the event, precisely this, that gave success to the piece. We find, in the remarks on this piece, some anecdotes relating to the judgment of the house of Rambouillet.

It is astonishing that all these *Chef d'œuvres* followed one another year by year. *Cinna* was performed at the beginning of the year 1643, and *Polyeuctes* towards the end. It is true that Lopes de Vega, Garnier, and Calderon, composed even more quick *Stantes pedes in uno*; but when we consider that they do not attend to one rule, and that they are neither bound in by rhyme, conduct, or stage decorum; we must believe it was more easy to write ten such tragedies, than to write *Cinna* and *Polyeuctes*.

ON THE L Y A R, 1642.

WE must acknowledge that we owe to Spain the first affecting tragedy, and the first comedy of character, that we can boast of in France. Let us not

be ashamed that we were slow in our progress to perfection in both these species of the drama. It is much, that in an age, when they were acquainted with nothing but romantic adventures and buffoonry, Corneille introduced the moral to the stage. This piece is only a translation, but it is perhaps to this translation, that we are indebted for Moliere. It is impossible, in effect, that the inimitable Moliere, could behold this piece, without instantly discovering the amazing superiority that this stile has over all others, and without giving himself entirely up to it. There is as much difference betwixt the Melite and the Lyar, as there is betwixt all the comedies of this time, and the Melite. Thus did Corneille both reform our tragedy, and comedy, by his happy imitations. We follow the edition which Corneille published of his works in 1644, an edition now become extremely rare, in which we find the *Cid*, with the imitations from Guilain de Castro, Pompey; with the imitations from Lucan; and the Lyar, with the very curious verses which are not in any other edition. Corneille did not servily copy into his Lyar, the features that he found in Lopez, or in Roxas, so that one cannot distinguish which of these two Spanish poets is the author of this comedy.

ON THE SEQUEL TO THE LYAR, 1644.

THE Sequel to the Lyar never succeeded. If we may be permitted to give our opinion, we think, that with some alterations, it might be brought to produce more effect on the stage, than the Lyar itself. The intrigue of this second Spanish piece, is much more interesting than the first. But even where the plot is pleasing, success depends, in a great degree, on the occasional embellishments, and incidents, which Corneille neglected, rather too much, in the last acts of this piece.

THEODORE

THE VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

IF any thing can astonish and confound the human mind, it is, that the author of *Polyeuctes* can also be that of *Theodore*. That the same man who wrote the sublime scene, in which *Paulina* demands from *Severus* her gallant, the favour of her husband, could also present a heroine in an infamous light, accompanied by all the odious, and ridiculous indecency, and coloured with all the false reasoning, that such impertinence could suggest; attended by all the incidents, that a situation so shameless could produce, and drest in a habit of rhyme, as coarse as the most inapt poetaster could have wove.

Why did not some friend prevent the author of *Cinna*, from dishonouring his talents, by the shameful choice of such a subject, and by an execution as base as the subject itself? nay, how did the comedians dare to represent *Theodore*?

RHODOGUNE,

PRINCESS OF THE PARTHIANS.

RHODOGUNE does not more resemble *Pompey*, than *Pompey* does *Cinna*, and *Cinna* the *Cid*. It is this variety that characterizes the true genius. The subject of this piece is as grand and terrible, as that of *Theodore* is whimsical and ridiculous.

There is the same rivallship between this *Rhodogune*, and that of *Gilbert*, that there was, afterwards, between the *Phedres* of *Racine*, and *Pradon*. The piece of *Gilbert* was performed some months before that of *Corneille* in 1645; it was strangled, in its birth, in spite of the protection it received from the son of *Louis* the

XIIIth, and the lieutenant-general of the kingdom, to whom Gilbert, who was the Resident of queen Christina, addressed it. The queen of Sweden, and the first prince of France, could not, more effectually, support this futile production, than afterwards the houses of Bouillon, and Nevers, could support the *Phedre* of Pradon.

In vain did the Resident present to her Royal Highness, in his epistle dedicatory, "the generous Rhodogune, the wife, and mother of two great monarchs of Asia." In vain did he compare this Rhodogune to her Royal Highness, although she resembled her in nothing. The pitiful performance was forgot, both by its protector, and the public.

The privilege granted to the Resident, for the exhibition of his Rhodogune, is dated the 8th of January, 1646. It was printed in February, 1647. The privilege of Corneille is dated on the 13th of April, 1646, and his Rhodogune was not printed till the 30th of January, 1647. So that the Rhodogune of Corneille did not appear on paper till a year, or thereabouts, after the representation of Gilbert's piece, that is to say, not till a year after that piece existed no more.

What is very strange, we discover, in these two pieces, precisely the same situations, and often, even the same sentiments that arise from those situations. The fifth act is different; it is terrible and pathetic in Corneille. Gilbert believed that he rendered his piece interesting, by making the catastrophe happy: and he has made an act as cold, and insipid, as it is possible to find on the theatre.

We may also remark, that Rhodogune plays in the piece of Gilbert, the part which Corneille gives to Cleopatra, and by which Gilbert falsifies the history.

It is strange that Corneille, in his preface, does not speak of a resemblance so striking. Bernard de Fontenelle, in the life of Corneille his uncle, tells us, that Corneille, having, in confidence, imparted the plan of his piece to a friend; his friend, indiscreetly, gave it to the Resident, who, contrary to the rights of men, anticipated

cipated Corneille. This anecdote is not very probable: seldom does a man, invested with a public employment, dishonour, and render himself ridiculous for so small a matter. All the memoirs of the time, however, have spoken of it; and such a theft, indeed, deserved to be made public.

They speak of an ancient romance of Rhodogune. I have not seen it: it is, they say, a pamphlet, printed in octavo at Sommaville, which equally served the great author, and the little. Corneille embellished the romance, and Gilbert spoiled it. The stile also was intolerable in Gilbert, when set in comparison with the other; for, notwithstanding the inequalities of Corneille, there is as much difference, between his composition, and that of his cotemporaries, up to Racine, as there is between the pencil of Michael Angelo, and the brush of a dawber.

There is another romance of Rhodogune in two volumes, but it was not printed till the year 1668. It is very rare and almost forgot. The first is intire.

DON SANCHE OF ARRAGON, 1650.

THIS pure species of romance, stript of every thing, that creates an emotion in the breast, and of all, that could constitute the soul of tragedy, was in vogue before Corneille. *Don Bernard de Cabrera*, *Laure Persecutee*, and many other pieces, are in this taste: it is to this, that they have given the appellation of *heroic comedy*, a middle kind, and which is capable of possessing beauties. The comedy of *L'ambitieux*, of Destouches, is, in some respect, of this kind, although much inferior to the Don Sancho of Arragon, and even to the *Laure*. This species of comedy was invented by the Spanish: there is a good deal of it in Lopez de Vega. This is drawn from a Spanish piece intituled, *El Placio Confuso*, and from the romance of the *Pélage*.

Perhaps

Perhaps the heroic comedies are preferable to what we call vulgar tragedy, or weeping comedy. In effect, this weeping comedy, absolutely deprived of the comique, is a monster issuing from the incapacity of being either comic or tragic.

He, who is conscious to himself, that he cannot reach either the true comedy, or the true tragedy, endeavours to work upon us by the moving madrigals of vulgar adventures. Possessing not the gift of the comique, he strives to supply its absence by affecting us. He cannot elevate himself on the *sock*, but he mounts a little on the *buskin*.

There certainly have arisen many fatal occurrences among the lowest of our citizens, but they are less interesting than those of sovereigns, with whose fate that of nations is leagued. A clown, perhaps, may have been assassinated as well as Pompey, but the death of Pompey produced consequences very different from that of the clown.

If you treat the interests of a clown in the stile that you would treat of Mithridates, there can be no characteristic agreement in your scene. If you represent a terrible adventure of a common man in a familiar stile, this stile, adapted to the subject, will not be applicable to the king. We must not transpose the boundaries of the arts: comedy ought to elevate, and tragedy to depress itself when occasion requires; but neither the one, nor the other ought to change their natures.

Corneille pretends that the refusal of an illustrious patronage, occasioned the fall of his Don Sancho. The suffrage which he wanted was that of the great Condé. But Corneille ought to have remembered, that the distaste and the strictures of the Cardinal de Richlieu, a man more reputed in literature, than the great Condé, had done no injury to his Cid. It is more easy for a prince to make even a civil war, than to destroy a good work. Phedre advanced itself against the cabals and the opposition of men the most powerful.

If Don Sancho is almost forgot, and if it never had any great success, it is, because three princesses, enamoured

moured of one Incognito, utter the most frigid maxims of love and pride; because, it is so conducted, that we do not know who is to marry these princesses, and because the person does not seem at all solicitous to inform himself whether they are married or not. You always find love treated, in the following pieces of Corneille, in the cold tortured stile of the romances of that time. You never find the sentiments of the heart developed with that noble simplicity, with that natural tenderness, and with that elegance which enchants us in the fourth book of Virgil, in certain passages of Ovid, and in many of the characters of Racine: a merit which, after Racine, no one among us enjoyed; to which no author approached in Italy after the *Pastor Fido*; a merit totally unknown to England, as well as to the rest of Europe.

Corneille is very grand in the good scenes of the *Cid*, of *Cinna*, of the *Horaces*, *Polyeuctes*, *Pompey*, &c. admitting which, we may be permitted to speak the truth of him otherwise, though it may depress him. His memory is respectable, but truth is more so: this commentary is, principally, designed for the instruction of the young. The greater part of those who strive to imitate Corneille, and who believe that a lifeless plot, followed by some stale maxims of hypocrisy, which they call intrigue, and of insolence, which they call grandeur, will support their pieces, have fallen forever. Corneille has grafted, if we examine them with precision, into all his pieces, after *Theodore*, and *Pertharites*, some little fault that throws a shade upon his works; and he has often forgot, that frigidity, which is the worst of faults, is that which destroys him.

The heroic grandeur of *Don Sancho*, who believes himself to be the son of a fisherman, is of a species of beauty before unknown to France; but this is the only matter that served to support his piece, which was otherways unworthy the author of *Cinna*. Success depends almost always on the subject; why then did Corneille choose to himself the Spanish romances, and the

the Spanish comedy for his model, in preference to the Roman history and the Greek fable?

It would be a noble subject for a play, that a soldier of fortune should re-establish, on the throne, his mistress and his mother, without knowing it. But it would require, in such a subject, that all should be grand, and interesting.

ANDROMEDA, 1650.

IT appears, from the piece of Andromeda, that Corneille applied himself to very different species of the drama. He was the first who produced comedies, in which we discovered the language of gentlemen; the first who brought forth a tragedy worthy of them, and the first again who exhibited a piece, in which machinery was happily introduced, and which we could see with pleasure.

There was represented, indeed, in the marriage of Orpheus and Euridice, a grand apparatus of machinery in 1640. There was music in some of the scenes, and the rest was full of declamation as usual.

The Andromeda of Corneille is as superior to his Orpheus, as the Melite had been to the other comedies of that time. So that Corneille was superior to his cotemporaries, in every line of the drama, that he attempted.

It is true, that when we have seen the Andromeda of Quinault, we cannot, any longer, tolerate that of Corneille. In like manner as the comedies of Moliere sunk into oblivion, "The Melite, and the Galarie du Palais." There are, however, beauties in the Andromeda of Corneille, and those agreeable to the rules of true tragedy; particularly in the recital, which Phorbas makes in the last scene but one.

This piece was performed at the theatre of Little Bourbon. An Italian, named Torrelli, made the machinery, and decorations. This exhibition had great success, but the Opera totally overthrew all pieces of
this

this kind, and, even before we had the Opera, Andromeda could not support itself, after the taste became perfect.

Andromeda was so good a subject for our Opera, that thirty-two years after Corneille, Quinault treated it, under the title of Perseus. This lyric drama of Quinault, was, like all that issued from his pen, tender, ingenious, and easy. He keeps his hold upon the heart in almost every couplet; they speak these couplets, they sing them, they make a thousand applications of them. They support the music of Lulli, which is no other than a declamation of notes, appropriated with great ingenuity, to the character of the language. The recitative is so fine, that it appears, of all things on earth, the most easy. No one has been able to imitate this composition. There just wanted the verse of Quinault, to give strength to the recitative of Lulli; which demanded actors, more than singers. In fine, Quinault was, without contradiction, in spite of his enemies, in spite of Boileau, of the number of those great men, who added lustre to the memorable, and immortal age of Louis XIV.

N I C O M E D E S, 1650.

NICOMEDES is in the stile of Don Sancho of Arragon. The Spanish, as we have before said, were the inventors of this kind, which is a species of the heroic comedy. It has neither the terror nor the pity of true tragedy. It is composed of extraordinary adventures, bravadoes, of generous sentiments, and of intrigues, whose happy catastrophes neither cost the dramatis personæ a drop of blood, nor the spectators a tear. The dramatic art is an imitation of Nature as well as the art of painting. Both the sublime, and the simple, are admitted as subjects for the painter. Common life, country life, landscapes, and even grotesques, are proper for the art. Raphael hath painted the horrors

rors of death, and the amours of Psyche. It is thus, that, in the dramatic art, we have the pastoral, the farce, the comedy, the tragedy more or less heroic, more or less terrible, and more or less affecting.

When Nicomedes was revived in 1756, after it had been neglected more than eighty years, the king's comedians announced it under the title of a tragic-comedy. This piece is, perhaps, one of the strongest proofs of the genius of Corneille; and I do not wonder at the affection which he had for it. This kind is not only the least theatrical of all, but the most difficult to treat. There is not that magic which transports the soul, so finely described by Horace:

Ille per extinctum fanem mihi posse videtur
Ire poeta meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat et mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut magus, et modo me Thebis modo ponit Athenis.

This species of tragedy, not being supported by a pathetic subject, by the grandeur of the scene, nor by the fury of the passions, the author could only excite, in the audience, the sentiments of admiration for the hero of his piece. Admiration hardly moves the soul; or at least the emotion is feeble. It is of all the passions, that, which abates the soonest. The character of Nicomedes, joined to an intrigue mingled with terror, such as that of Rhodogune, would have been a *chef-d'œuvre*.

PERTHARITES

KING OF THE LOMBARDS, 1659.

THIS piece, as they say, was unhappy. It was not represented more than once; the public was just. Corneille, towards the end of the strictures on Pertharites, says, that "the sentiments are vigorous" and noble, and that the measure is well turned." Our respect for truth, always overcoming our respect for

for Corneille, obliges us to acknowledge, that the sentiments are often extravagant, or feeble, but rarely noble, and that the verse although it may be well turned, appears, somewhat, like prose, that runs comically into rhyme.

In the second scene Eduige says to Rodelinde.

“ Je ne vous parle pas de votre Partharite.

“ Mais il se pourra faire enfin qu'il ressuscite,

“ Qui'l rend à vos desirs leur juste possesseur;

“ Et c'est dont je vous donne avis en bonne sœur.

“ Vous êtes donc, madame, un grand exemple à suivre;

“ Pour vivre l'âme saine, on n'a qu'à l'imiter:

“ Et qui veut vivre aimé, n'a qu'à vous en conter.”

I do not speak to you, of your Partharites;

But he may yet contrive to live again,

Who owes, to your desires, their just possessor,

And 'tis of him, your sister gives this comfort.

Then, lady, wilt thou set a great example.

To live, with heart unbroke, I need but imitate you;

And he who wishes to be loved, but needs to court you.

The names alone of the heroes of this piece hurt us. There is an Eduige, a Grimoald, and an Onulphe. The author of Childebrant was not even more unsuccessful in his choice of subject, and heroes.

It is; perhaps, useful, towards the information of the human mind, and the advancement of the theatric art, to enquire, why Corneille, who ought still to have advanced in excellence; who knew the theatre, that is to say, who knew the heart of man; who was so conversant with ancient history; and whose genius ought to have been fortified, and strengthened by his experience, should yet fall so low as to be incapable of supporting either the conduct, the sentiments, or the diction of most of his latter pieces. Is it not, that having acquired a great name, and not at the same time possessing a fortune worthy of his merit, he was forced to labour with too much haste? *Conaribus obstat res angusta*

gusta domi. Perhaps he had not an intelligent, and an honest friend. He had contracted the unfortunate habit, of permitting every thing he wrote to pass, however coarse the language. He knew not, like Racine, the benefit of sacrificing even good verses, and entire scenes,

The preceeding pieces of Nicomedes, and Don Sancho of Arragon, not having gone off with eclat; he ought to have set his genius to the spur, and redoubled his efforts: but he reposed himself on his reputation: his fame hurt his genius; he saw himself without a rival. None were spoken of but him; none were known but him. It happened to him, as to Lulli, who having excelled in the music of declamation, by the assistance of the inimitable Quinault, became listless, and often negligent in almost every other part. Wanting a rival, like Corneille, he made no efforts to surpass himself. His cotemporaries did not know his weakness. He failed, but not till a long while after he had risen to the pinnacle of fame. For the French, who judge of the arts only from comparison, now see that the greater part of the detached airs, and simphonies of Lulli, are lifeless and weak.

It would be with regret, that I would see the piece of *Pertharites* printed, if I did not believe that we may discover in it the root of the excellent tragedy of *Andromache*.

Is it possible, that this *Pertharites* could be any model to the father of the pathetic, elegant, and nervous tragedy of *Andromache*? his admirable piece has some scenes bordering on coquetry, the vice of which, however, is disguised by the charm of perfect poetry, and sanctified by the happy usage of the French language.

The excellent Racine gave the world his *Andromache* in 1668, nine years after *Pertharites*. The reader may consult the commentary, that he will find on the second act, where he will discover all the disposition of the tragedy of *Andromache*, and even the greater part of the sentiments, that Racine hath introduced into that work, so much superior to the other.

He

He will find that, from a naked subject, and which appeared exceedingly unfit, he has been able to draw those striking beauties, which we find in his piece.

It is the only comment that we shall make on the unfortunate piece of Pertharites. The *amateurs* of the drama, and authors, will easily add their proper reflections to the little, that we have said on the singular honour, which Pertharites obtained, to produce the excellent piece of *Andromache*.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE, 1661.

THE history of the Golden Fleece is much less fabulous, and less frivolous than is generally believed. It is, of all the periods of ancient Greece, the most brilliant, and the best authenticated. A commerce was opened from Greece to the extremities of the Black Sea; this commerce consisted principally of furs, and it is, from this, that the fable of the fleece arose. The voyage of the Argonauts served to make known to the Greeks, the heavens and the earth. Chiron who went on this expedition, observed, that the equinox of the spring was in the middle of the constellation of Aries, and this observation, made about the year of the world 4,300, was the base on which they afterwards stood, and computed that, in the period of 25,900 years, the earth made its astonishing revolution round the axis of our system.

The inhabitants of Colchos, neighbours to a colony of Huns, were barbarians, as they are to this day. Their women have been always remarkable for beauty; and it is very likely that the Argonauts ravished and carried off some of the Mingrelians, as in our own day, we have seen a man, sent to Torno to measure a degree of the meridian, carry off a daughter of that country. The ravishment of Medea was the source of all the adventures, that are attributed to that female, and which, perhaps, did not deserve to be known. She passed for

a magician. This pretended magic was derived from some poisonous roots, which they alledged to be common in Mingrelia; and it is believed that these unhappy secrets were one of the sources of that belief in magic, which over-run the earth in those times. The other source was imposition; men having been always divided into two classes, viz. into quacks and fools. The *first* employed herbs at hazard, to cure diseases, which Nature would have cured by her own strength, and wished the world to believe that they were wiser than other people: the *second* class did believe them; so that, of a sudden, all was deceit and miracle.

It was the custom of the Greeks, and of all other nations, except perhaps the Chinese, to turn all history into fable. Poetry would only celebrate grand events, and it either embellished or disfigured them. The expedition of the Argonauts was sung in verse, and although it deserved to be celebrated in a true and useful relation, it was not known but by the fictions of the poets.

The fabulous part of this history, seems to be more suited to the opera, than to tragedy. A Golden Fleece, guarded by bulls that breathed fire, and by a great dragon: the bulls yoked into a plough of adamant; the teeth of the dragon, as they dropped, rising into armed men. These conceits have no resemblance of true tragedy, which, above all, ought to be the faithful picture of the manners of men. So that Corneille wished to make a species of the opera, or at least a piece of machinery with little music. It is much in the same manner as he had before treated the subject of Andromeda. The French opera did not appear till the year 1671, and the Golden Fleece is in 1660. Indeed a year before the representation of this piece of Corneille, that is in 1659, there had been exhibited at Yff, in the house of the Cardinal de Mazarin, a musical pastoral, but he had few scenes, no machinery, and no dances, and the opera, that was established afterwards, united all these advantages.

There

There was more machinery, and changes of decoration, in the Golden Fleece, than music. We find only the Sirens singing in one place, and Orpheus in another; but indeed we had not, at that time, a musician capable of composing airs, that answered to the idea which arises in our minds of the song of Orpheus, and the Sirens. Our melody, up to Lully, consisted only in cold, languishing, and mournful ditties, or in ballads similar to the airs of our novels, and our harmony was, on the other hand, as gross.

In general, the tragedies, in which the music interrupted the declamation, had rarely any great effect, because the one smothered the other. If the piece is interesting, it is unpleasing to see the interest destroyed, by the instruments distracting the attention. If the music is fine, the ear of the spectator returns with pain and disgust, to the simple harmony of recital.

It was not the same among the ancients where declamation, called Melopée, was a kind of song. The change from this Melopée to the symphony of the choir, neither astonished nor hurt the ear.

What most surprized the audience in the representation of the Golden Fleece, was the novelty of the machinery and decorations, to which they had not been accustomed. A Marquis de Sourdeac, a great mechanist, and passionately fond of grand exhibitions, had the piece represented in 1660, at his chateau of Neufbourg, in Normandy, with great magnificence. It is the same Marquis de Sourdeac, to whom we owe the establishment of the opera in France afterwards. He totally ruined himself, and died poor and miserable through his too great love of the arts.

The prologues of *Andromeda*, and of the *Golden Fleece*, in praise of Louis XIV. served afterwards as models for all the prologues of Quinault; and it was an indispensable custom to make an eulogy on the king, at the head of all the operas, as they make in the discourse to the French Academy.

There are many great beauties in the prologue to the Golden Fleece; and, above all, the following few lines in which France is personified, please every one.

“ A vaincre tant de fois mes forces s'affaiblissent,
 “ L'état est florissant, mais les peuples gémissent;
 “ Leurs membres décharnés, courbent sous mes hauts faits,
 “ Et la gloire du trône accable les sujets.”

My conquering soldiers now some respite seek,
 My state is flourishing, but my sons are weak;
 My great achievements hardly they endure,
 And what exalts my throne, but makes them poor.

Towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV. a long time after this piece had disappeared from the stage, and when it was only held in estimation by a few of our men of letters, one of our poets introduced into a new tragedy, the above lines, and put them into the mouth of one of his characters. They were defended by the police; but it is very singular, that, having been well received in the year 1660, they should displease thirty years after. And that, after they had been regarded as the noble expression of an important truth, they should be looked upon, in another author, as a trait of satire. Indeed they deserved only to have been considered as a plagiarism.

In the same manner as the opera of Quinault sunk Andromeda, and the Golden Fleece into oblivion, did the prologues of the same author also dispossess the stage of those of Corneille. The one and the other are composed of colloquies, of allegories, or otherways they are drawn from the ancient fable. Mars and Venus are, at one time, introduced, at another Victory and Peace; and the only means that were used to support these fantastic beings, was to make them speak little, and to cover their conversation with good music, and the decorations of scenery. France and Victory who reason together, who call one another alternately by their names, tiresome as they are in their long discourse,

and who push their respective arguments home with energy, are true pictures of a college disputation.

The prologue of *Amadis* is a model in this way.— They are the characters of the piece who appear in the prologue, and who join lightning to the light, and thunder to the noise. In all the prologues of Quinault, the couplets are soft, and harmonious.

In regard to the tragedy of the *Golden Fleece*, it would not be tolerated now a-days, such as Corneille left it. We would not suffer Juno, under the appearance of Chalciope, speaking and acting as an ordinary woman, and giving advice to Jason as to a confidant, in the following manner :

“ C'est à vous d'achever un si doux changement ;

“ Un soupir poussé juste ensuite d'une excuse,

“ Perce un cœur bien avant quand lui-même il s'accuse.

“ J A S O N lui répond,

“ Déesse, quel encens !—

“ J U N O N.

“ Traitez moi de princesse,

“ Jason, et laissez-là l'encens et la déesse.

“ Mais cette passion, est elle en vous si forte

“ Qu'à tous autres objets elle ferme la porte ?

“ Un soupir poussé juste ensuite d'une excuse,

“ Perce un cœur bien avant quand lui-même il s'accuse.”

Strive to accomplish this, so pleasing change—
That rising sigh, that's meant as an excuse,
Pierces a heart, already self condemned.

J A S O N answers,

Oh goddess, what incense !—

J U N O.

Treat me as your princess,

Jason, and tell me not, of incense or of goddess.—

But to your passion ;—is it so intense

That your heart's shut to every other object ?—

That rising sigh, that's meant as an excuse,

Pierces a heart already self condemned.

It is, in this tragedy, that we discover that taste for puns and playing upon words, which was in fashion, at almost all the courts of Europe, at that time, and which mingled itself ridiculously with the politesse introduced by the mother of Louis XIV. and by the houses of Longueville, Rochfoucault, and Rambouillet. It is this false taste that is so justly exploded by Boileau, in this verse,

“ Toutefois à la cour les turlupins restent,
 “ Infipides plaisans! bouffons infortunés,
 “ D’un jeu de mots grossier partisans surannés.”

Ev’n now, within the court, the quibblers live,
 Infipid mortals! still your ears who stun,
 With the stale jingle of a hacknied pun.

He gives us to understand that tragedy itself was infected with the same fault.

“ Le madrigal d’abord en fut enveloppé,
 “ La tragedie en fit ses plus chères délices.”

With these the madrigal at first was filled,
 And even tragedy had its dear conceits.

The last verse is a little overstrained. There are indeed to be found some quibbles in Corneille, but they are rare. The most remarkable is that of Hypsypile, who in the fourth scene of the third act, says to Medea, her rival, alluding to her magic,

“ Je n’ai que des attrait, & vous avez de charmes.”

I only have attractions,—you have charms.

Medea says in answer,

“ C’est beaucoup en amour, que de savoir charmer.”

’Tis better to have *these* in love, than *charms*.

Medea

Medea falls into the taste of quibbling in her soliloquy, where addressing herself to Reason to take arms against Love, she says

“ Donne encor quelques loix à qui te fait la loi ;
 “ Tyrannise un tyran qui triomphe de toi ;
 “ Et par un faux trophée usurpe sa victoire,
 “ Sauve tout le dehors d'un honteux esclavage,
 “ Qui t'enleve tout le dedans.”

Give therefore *laws* to *him*, who gives thee *laws* ;
 Tyrannise o'er the tyrant, that triumphs o'er thee ;
 And, with thy trophies reared, usurp his victory,
 O ! save but the outward visage of thy slavery,
 Altho' within it wreck thee !

The stile of the Golden Fleece is much inferior to that of Oedipus. There is not any one shining feature in it, that we can discover, and therefore the reader will excuse us, for not making more remarks upon it.

SERTORIUS, 1662.

AFTER so many tragedies unworthy of Corneille, we now see one where we frequently reconnoitre the author of Cinna. This piece deserves more attention, and more remarks than the others. The interview of Pompey and Sertorius had the success which it deserved, and this success revived all his enemies. The most implacable of whom was the Abbé d'Aubignac, a man celebrated in his time, and whose “ practice of the theatre,” indifferent as it is, made him to be regarded as a legislator in literature. This Abbé, who had been a preacher for a long time, had acquired much credit, in some of the first houses in Paris. It undoubtedly created much uneasiness to the author of Cinna, to see a preacher and a man of considerable talents, write to the dutchess of Retz, under the privilege of the king, in a manner that would have disgraced a man less known, and less esteemed than Corneille.

“ You are a poet, and that a dramatic poet,” says he to this great man, in his fourth dissertation, addressed to Mad. de Rhetz. “ You have abandoned yourself to a vile dependance on buffoons. Your ordinary commerce is only with your porters, and you have no friend but among the booksellers. We must necessarily have lost our senses as well as yourself, before we can have the inclination to profit from your labours, and your eager pursuit after jackpuddings and booksellers. It happens, often as we praise you, that you are not less in want of fame than you are of money. Rid yourself, M. de Corneille, of these infamous modes of speech, more infamous even than your verses. I have believed, with many others, that you are the author of the critique on the *Ecole des femmes*, the school for women; and that Lycidas was only a disguised name for M. de Corneille. You are, without doubt, the Marquis de Mascarille, who frets, who giggles, who prates throughout, and who says not any thing that’s worth attending to,” &c.

These low invectives found friends, because Corneille was yet alive. Never did the Zoiles, the Gacqns, the Frerons spew forth greater indignities. He attacked Corneille on his family, on his person; he examined him even to his voice, his gait, his actions, his domestic conduct; and in this torrent of abuse, he was seconded by all the little scribblers of the time, a circumstance that we may easily give credit to.

I spare, to the delicacy of noble minds, and to eyes accustommed to read only what instructs and pleases them, the enumeration of all those personalities, all those calumnies that were spread against this great man, by those pamphleteers, and paragraph-mongers, who are a disgrace to the nation; and who, for the sake of being more read, and of gaining by their villainy, rather than from envy, engage themselves to decry all that would do honour to their country, to insult merit and virtue, and to heap imposture upon imposture, in the vain hope that some one of their lies will come to
the

the sight of men in place, and will serve to destroy those whom they cannot humble. They imputed verses to him that he never wrote—an ordinary resource of envious littleness, but an ineffectual resource. For those who have baseness enough to publish a work beneath the cover of a great man's name, have not, in any one instance, the genius necessary to imitate him, and therefore the imposture is suddenly detected.

But, in fine, nothing could obscure the glory of Corneille, the only thing almost that remained to him. The people of all times, and of all nations, just in the long-run, judge of great men by their good works, and not by those where they have occasionally failed.

The fine scenes of the *Cid*, the admirable passages of the *Horaces*, the noble and exalted beauties of *Cinna*, the sublime of *Cornelia*, the parts of *Severus* and *Paulina*, the fifth act of *Rhodogune*, the conference of *Sertorius* and *Pompey*: so many excellencies all produced in a time, when the nation was, with difficulty, rising from the thralldom of barbarity, assure to Corneille a place among the most exalted names, to the latest of posterity.

So did the excellent *Racine* triumph over the unjust and false taste of *Madame de Savigné*; over the farces of *Subligni*; the miserable criticisms of *Vilé*, and the cabals of the *Boyers*, and the *Pradons*. So shall *Moliere* support himself for ever, and be the father of true comedy, although his pieces be not followed as heretofore, by the fools. So will the charms of *Quinault's* opera be ever relished by him, who is sensible to the sweet harmony of poesy, to the natural, to the truth of expression, and to the graces of an easy stile, altho' these very operas have been heretofore the butt of *Boileau's* satires, his personal enemy, and although they are less frequently performed than at first.

They are the *chefs-d'œuvres* of Corneille, that are most rarely performed. There are, I believe, two reasons for this. The first is, that our nation is not now what it was in the times of the *Horaces* and of *Cinna*. The first men of the realm, at that time, whether in

the army, the senate, or the church, did themselves the honour, in imitation of the senate of Rome, to assist at an exhibition where they found instruction, and pleasure of so noble a kind.

Who were the first auditors of Corneille? A Condé, a Turenne, a Cardinal de Rhetz, a duke de la Rochefoucault, a Molé, a Lamignon, the principal men of letters, for whom there was a particular seat set apart, as well as for the members of the academy. The preacher came there to learn the eloquence, and the art of pronunciation—it was the school of Bossuet. The man designed to fill the first appointments of the gown, came to instruct himself to speak with dignity. But who, in the present day, frequent our theatres? A certain number of young well-drest persons of both sexes.

The second reason is, that we rarely have performers capable of representing Cinna, and the Horaces. We do not, perhaps, enough encourage this profession, which demands both genius and education, a profound knowledge of the language, and all the exterior talents of the art of oratory. When he found artists who united all these merits, it was then that Corneille appeared in all his grandeur.

My admiration, and respect for this great man, shall not, however, prevent me from pursuing that great duty which I have prescribed for myself, of pointing out, with as much freedom as impartiality, whatever appears to me defective, as well, as what, I may conceive, to be sublime. As much as the invectives of the d'Aubignacs, and, of those who resemble them are shameful; so much ought we to love a deliberate animadversion, in which we respect the truth that is sought after, the taste of the connoisseurs who are consulted, and the name of the illustrious author whom we comment on. The critic considers only the work, and not the author; nor ought he to spare a single fault if he wishes to be useful.

SOPHO.

SOPHONISBE, 1663.

THERE are portions of history, that, on a superficial view, appear very eligible subjects for tragedy, but which are found, on a nearer inspection, to be almost impracticable; such are, for example, the catastrophes of Sophonisbe and of Mark Anthony. One of the reasons which forever exclude these subjects from the theatre, is, that it is very difficult to prevent the hero from being lowered in the estimation of the audience. Massinissa, obliged to see his wife led in triumph to Rome, or to kill her to prevent that infamy, could hardly be wrought up into an agreeable part. An old Triumvir, like Anthony, who perished for the sake of such a woman as Cleopatra, is still less interesting, because he is more contemptible.

The Sophonisbe of Mairet had great success, but it was in a time, not only when the taste of the public was not formed, but when there was not as yet a single tragedy that was supportable.

It had been the same with the Sophonisbe of Trissino; and that of Corneille was also neglected at the end of a few years. It created indeed, in its infancy, a number of criticisms, and it had celebrated defenders; but it appears that it was neither well attacked, nor well protected.

The principal point was forgot in all these disputes, that is, to know if the piece was interesting. It is not so, since, notwithstanding the name of its author, it was totally neglected about eighty years after its first representation. If this defect of interest, which, as we have said before, is the greatest of all faults, is made up for, by a scene, like that of Sertorius and Pompey, it might, we think, be performed sometimes with eclat.

It will not be an unuseful labour, to animadvert here on the stile of Mairet, and the other tragedians preceeding the author of the Cid.

Syphax, in the first scene, reproaches Sophonisbe his wife, for a criminal amour which she had with the king

king Massinissa his enemy: "I know well," says he,
 "that you despise me, and that you love another, but

"Ne pouvais-tu trouver dû prendre tes plaisirs,
 "Qu'en cherchant l'amitié des ce prince Numide?"

Can you not seek for, and secure your pleasures,
 But in th' esteem of this Numidian prince?

Sophonisbe answers him,

"J'ai voulu m'assurer de l'assistance d'un,
 "A qui le nom *Libique* avec nous fut commun."

I would assure myself of *his* assistance
 Who boasts, in common with ourselves,
 The name of *Libyan*.

The same Syphax bewails, to his confident Philon,
 the infidelity of his wife; when Philon, for his con-
 solation, represents to him,

"Que c'est aux grandes ames,
 "A souffrir de grands maux, et que femmes, sont femmes."

It is for great minds
 To suffer great misfortunes, and that women
 Are but women.

Afterwards when Syphax is conquered, Phenice, con-
 fidente to Sophonisbe, advises her to endeavour to please
 the conqueror—she says to her,

"Au reste, la douleur ne vous a point éteint
 "Ni la clarté des yeux, ni la beauté du teint
 "Vos pleurs vous ont lavée; et vous êtes de celles
 "Qu'un air triste et dolent rend encore plus belles.
 "Vos regards languissans font naître la pitié,
 "Que l'amour suit par fois, et toujours l'amitié;
 "N'étant rien de pareil aux effets admirables
 "Que font dans les grands cœurs des beautés misérables.
 "Croyez que Massinisse est un vivant rocher,
 "Si vos perfections ne la peuvent toucher,"

For sorrow hath not blemished your attractions;
 The sparkling of your eye, the colouring of your cheek
 Is still the same—your tears increase your beauty.

You

You are one of those, to whom the air of sadness
 And of grief, bestows superior lustre.
 Your languishing demeanour calls for pity ;
 Pity gives birth to love, and endless friendship.
 No charm produces more divine effects,
 Than weeping beauty on a hero's soul.
 Consider Massinissa but a rock, a living rock
 Alone, if your perfections do not melt him.

Sophonisbe, who had no need of this advice, employed against the heart of Massinissa, the most seducing language, and spoke to him with a dignity that rendered her more and more enchanting. One of the attendants that remarked the effect that the discourse of Sophonisbe made upon the prince, said, aside, to another of the attendants, " My companion, he gives way ;" and her companion answered, " The victory is ours, or I " have lost my understanding."

Such was the stile of the pieces, most ardently esteemed ; such was the incessant mixture of the tragic and the comic, that disgraced the theatre. Love was debased into vulgar gallantry ; the *grand* was no other than the *extravagant* ; the *lively* consisted in puns and quibbles ; all was devoid of nature. Hardly one person either thought, or spoke as he ought, in any of the public discourses.

It is true, that the Sophonisbe of Mairet, had one merit entirely new in France, that of being within the rules of the drama. The three unities, of time, place and action, were perfectly observed. We regard the author of Sophonisbe as the father of the French theatre, but it is only in respect to his regularity. He neither possessed fire, eloquence, grace, nor decency. There are some natural verses in his piece, and this *natural* was admired though it approached towards the *low*, because they knew not what it was to soar to the *sublime*.

In general, the stile of Mairet is either bombastic or grovelling. In this piece there is an officer in the train of Massinissa, who in announcing the death of Sophonisbe by poison, says to the king :

" Si

“ Si votre majesté desire qu'on lui montre
 “ Ce pitoyable objet, il est ici tout contre ;
 “ La porte de sa chambre est à deux pas d'ici,
 “ Et vous le pourrez voir de l'endroit que voici.”

If your majesty but wishes to behold
 This pitiable object, she is near at hand ;
 The entrance of her chamber is two paces hence
 And you may behold her there.

It is here that Massinissa, on seeing Sophonisbe expire, exclaims, addressing himself to the eyes of this beauty :

“ Vous avez donc perdu ces puissantes merveilles
 “ Qui dérobaient les cœurs et charmaient les oreilles !
 “ Clair soleil, la terreur d'un injuste Sénat,
 “ Et dont l'aigle romain n'a pu souffrir l'éclat
 “ Donques votre lumière a donné de l'ombrage, &c.”

Oh, thou bright sun ! and hast thou lost those wonders
 That stole away our hearts, and charm'd our ears !—
 That awed, and terrified a wicked Senate,
 And, with their beams, e'en stunn'd the Roman eagle.
 Now that thy lights remov'd, the world's in darkness.

He hardly ever composed a verse in any other stile. In this chaos, *true* tragedy was with difficulty disentangled from the *false*, and brought into existence. It was seen to bring along with it the glimmering light of genius ; but that which above all supported, for so long a time, the piece of Mairet was, that it possessed true passion. It was represented towards the end of 1634, two years before the *Cid*, and it attracted the regards of every one. Success in every respect depends on the genius of the age. The indifferent is admired in the days of ignorance, and the good is most approved of, when the times are polished.

O T H O, 1665.

IT will hardly be believed, how little the rash criticisms that were made on this piece in its infancy, were affected, by what either the author or his friends
 said

said in its defence. In vain did Corneille say, in his preface, that it was equal, if not superior, to every other of his productions. In vain did Fontenelle write a panegyric on it. The age is the sovereign judge, and it banished it from the stage. There was, without doubt, a reason for this, which it behoves us to discover. I do not know a better than by placing it in comparison with *Britannicus*. The public were apprized that when politics were introduced upon the stage, it was necessary to treat the subject like Racine. To furnish it with interest, with true passion, with the great emotions of eloquence, and that nothing was more necessary than a pure, noble, smooth and even style, which should support itself uniformly throughout the piece. Let us see how much of this was wanting in *Otho*.

It is evident that this tragedy is but the arrangement of a family, in which we are not interested. There is much conversation about love, and this love cools upon the reader. When this resort, that ought to interest us, fails in its effect, the piece is surely lost.

It is said in the history of the theatre, on the article *Otho*, that Corneille altered the fifth act three times. I can hardly believe this, but if it is true, it proves, that had he even altered it the fourth time, or oftener, it would have been impossible to draw an interesting fifth act from a subject so arranged. Corneille, however, did not, we are assured, alter the first scene of the first act three times, and yet it possesses the greatest beauty. When the subject opens the author, it rows along with full sails and a favourable sea; but when the author opens the subject, when it is almost sinking under its own weight, and so devoid of interest, that we cannot bring ourselves to believe it real, then every effort is ineffectual, and it wrecks. Corneille ought to have caught fire from the excellent portrait that Tacitus made of the court of Galba, and the sentiments that he gave to that emperor.

The name of Rome was, at that time, an important matter. Corneille had enough of invention to form a plot

plot of five acts; but all this had nothing in it, either interesting or tragic. He thought so himself, without doubt, more than once, while he was upon it, and when he came to the fifth act, his progress was arrested. He saw too late that it was not a tragedy. Even Racine himself was shipwrecked on the same rock.

AGESILAUS, 1666.

AGESILAUS is hardly known to the world, save in the *bon mot* of Despreaux:

“ J’ai vu l’Agéfilas ; hélas ! ”

I have seen Agefilans ; alas !

It was wrong, without doubt, to print this interjection in his works, as it could cost him no pains, nor give him any credit, but it was not severe in him to make it. The tragedy of Agefilaus is one of the weakest productions of Corneille. The public disapproved of it. We find, in a letter written by a gentleman of that time, who had raised a very disagreeable tumult in the pit, this distich of Aglatide.

“ Hélas ! je n’entends pas des mieux,

“ Comme il faut qu’un Hélas s’explique ;

“ Et lorsqu’on :—se retranche au langage des yeux

“ Je suis muette à la réplique.”

Hélas ! if I am not mista’en,

That Hélas doth itself explain ;

Yet, not in words, but by the eye ;—

Therefore, I’m dumb in my reply.

The same pit had overlook’d, in the piece of Otho, some verses that were very reprehensible, on account of the beauties of the first scene ; but there were no such beauties

beauties to be found in Agésilas. They discovered that Corneille grew old. He had given a piece to the theatre, almost every year, after that of 1625; and if you except the interval between *Pertharites* and *Oedipus*, he produced them too quick, and he seemed now to be exhausted. We must lament the bad state of his fortune, that did not correspond with his merit, and that forced him to labour.

They pretend, that the measure of the verse, which he employed in *Agésilas*, hurt its success. I believe, on the contrary, that this novelty was agreeable, and that the public would have been lavish of their approbation and applause, of a species of poetry so fertile, and various, if he had not been entirely negligent, in this piece as in those that preceded it, of interest and style.

The irregular verse might be brought to produce a very fine effect in tragedy. It requires, in truth, a rithme different from that of the Alexandrine, and from the verse of ten syllables. It requires a singular art. We may see some examples of the perfection of this kind in *Quinault*.

“ La perfide Renaud me suit;
 “ Tout perfide qu’il est, mon lâche cœur le suit.
 “ Il me laisse mourante, il veut que je périsse
 “ Je revois à regret la clarté qui me luit;
 “ L’horreur d’eternelle nuit
 “ Cède à l’horreur de mon supplice, &c. &c.”

Renaud treats my passion with flight;
 Yet the false one is still my torn bosom’s delight.
 He sees how I mourn, yet attempts not my cure.
 The charmer, to rack me, is still in my sight;
 The torments of eternal night
 Yield to the torments I endure.

This scene, *well recited*, would affect the heart as much as if it was *well sung*, and indeed, the music of this admirable scene is no other than a declamation of notes.

It

It is evidently proved by this, and other instances; that the irregular measure of verse might be happily adapted to tragedy, as it would introduce a beautiful novelty, of which the public are in want, for the purpose of diversifying the drama.

The reader will give us credit, for not making any particular comments on a piece, that deserved not even to be published. It would be better, without doubt, if only the good works, even of our good authors, were printed; but the public desire to have all, owing either to a vain curiosity, or to a secret malignity that loves to feast its eyes on the faults of great men.

The tragedy of Agésilas, is, in truth, very insipid, and its stile is as bad as its conduct. There are some passages in it, however, where we have a remnant of Corneille. Agésilas says to Lyfander,

“ En tirant toute à vous la suprême puissance,

“ Vous me laissez de titres vains.

“ On s’empresse à vous voir, on s’efforce à vous plaire;

“ On croit lire en vos yeux ce qu’il faut qu’on espère;

“ On pense avoir tout fait quand on vous a parlé.

“ Mon palais près du vôtre est un lien désolé.

“ Général en idée, et Monarque en peinture,

“ Des ces illustres noms pourrais-je faire cas,

“ S’il les faisait porter, moins comme Agésilas,

“ Que comme votre créature,

“ Et montrer avec pompe au reste des humains,

“ En ma propre grandeur l’ouvrage de vos mains?

“ Si vous m’avez fait roi, Lyfander, je veux l’être,

“ Soyez-moi bon sujet, je vous ferai bon maître;

“ Mais ne prétendez plus partager avec moi.

“ Ni la puissance, ne l’emploi.

“ Si vous croyez qu’un sceptre accable qui le porte

“ A moins qu’il prenne un aide à soutenir son poids.

“ Laissez discerner à mon choix,

“ Quelle main à m’aider pourrait être assez forte.

“ Vous aurez bonne part à des emplois si doux,

“ Quand vous pourrez m’en laisser faire;

“ Mais soyez sûr aussi d’un succès tout contraire;

“ Tant que vous ne voudrez les tenir que de vous.”

Yourself divesting of the sov’reign sway,

You gave to me no other than a name,

I serve, attend, and only live to please you,

Anticipate your wants, and read your wishes.

Your

Your orders are perform'd, ere yet you've giv'n them,
 My court, compared to your's, is but a desert,
 Myself a Chief in fancy, a King on canvas.
 Will these great men esteem me, if I act
 Less like Agefilaus, than as your creature?
 Or will my subjects pay me due allegiance,
 If, made your King, I sink into your slave?—
 If you've made me King, Lysander, I will be so,—
 Be thou a faithful subject to thy grateful master;
 But do not think to share his fortune, or his power,
 If you believe the sceptre weighs me down so much,
 That I must needs employ a hand to aid me,
 Leave me to judge, who best can fill the office.
 Enough shall you enjoy of princely favour,
 If I have all the power to make the gift;
 But be assured, it will be otherways,
 If you attempt to hold it as your own.

Though there are many faults in the composition of this speech, and though the stile is feeble, yet the sentiment is nervous and just, without being bombastical or flowery.

I may be permitted to say here, that in my infancy the Jesuit father de Tournemine, who was attached to Corneille, and an enemy to Racine, whom he regarded as a Jansenist, made me remark this speech, as he preferred it to all the beauties of Racine. It is thus that prejudice corrupts the taste, as she affects the judgment in all the actions of our lives.

ATTILA, KING OF THE HUNS, 1667.

ATTILA, unfortunately made its appearance, the same year, as *Andromache*. The comparison did not, in the smallest degree, contribute to re-advance Corneille to that point of grandeur, which he had once possessed. He had fallen, and Racine was elevated in his room. This then was the proper time for his retreat, and he ought to have taken the honourable advantage of it. The pleasantry of Des-

preaux, should have prevented him from hazarding his reputation again, or counseled him to be more careful.

“ J’ai vu l’Agefilaus ; hélas !
 “ Mais après l’Attila ; hola ! ”

I have seen Agefilaus ; Alas !
 But after Attila ; O la !

We have also seen this verse :

“ Peut aller au parterre attaquer Attila,
 “ Et si le roi des Huns, ne lui flatte l’Oreille,
 “ Traiter de Visigoths tous les vers de Corneille.”

We may go to the pit to damn the play ;
 If the king of the Huns, to flatter averse,
 We’ll feast, with Goths, on Corneille’s verse.

They pretend (for what will they not pretend) that Corneille regarded these lines as a matter of praise ; but what Poet can esteem it a merit to compose Gothic verses, especially as they are for the most part hard and obscure. A dry and an uncouth stile of expression is too commonly the characteristic of old age, and our genius becomes as siccons as our nerves. Racine, in the vigour of his age, blest with a tender heart, a fertile genius, and an harmonious ear, gave a beauty to the French language that it never before possessed. His verses enter into the minds of the auditory, as a bright day does into the eyes of the spectator. Never were the several gradations of the passions painted with a colouring more natural, or more expressive. Never was verse more spirited, and at the same time so true.

We need not be surprized, that the stile of Corneille, become as it was more and more incorrect and uneven in his latter pieces, should disgust those ears, which that of Racine enchanted, and who consequently became more difficult to please.

What

What criticism can we make on Attila, "who combats with his head less than with his arm?" What "on the terror of his arms, that gave to him for new companions the Alains, the Francs, and the Bourguignons?" What on Andaric and on Valamir, two pretending kings, whom he treats as subaltern officers? What, in fine, on this Andaric, who is in love, and who exclaims to himself:

"Qu'un roi est heureux, lorsque le ciel lui donne

"La main d'une si rare et si belle personne, &c."

That a king is blest when heaven bestows on him

The hand of so beautiful and rare a mistress, &c?

The same reason that prevented me from entering into any detail on Agésilas, prevails with me in favour of Attila. Those who are capable of reading those pieces, will pardon me, for restraining my remarks. At least, I am persuaded, they would not have pardoned me, if I had made any.

I shall only say, in this preface, that it is probable, that this Attila, very little known in history, was a man of prodigious merit, in his trade of robbery. A captain of the nation of Huns, who forced the emperor Theodosius, to pay him tribute; who knew how to discipline his armies; to recruit them even in an enemy's country, and to support war by war: a man, who marched a conqueror from Constantinople to the gates of Rome, and who, during a reign of ten years, was the terror of all Europe, ought to have had as much political wisdom, as courage; and it is a grand error, to suppose, that he could have been so great a conqueror, without possessing mental abilities equal to his valour. Are we to believe, on the faith of Jornandez, that Attila led an army of five hundred thousand men, into the plains of Campania? With what did he maintain such an army? The pretended victory, said to be gained by Attila, over the Châlons, in which two hundred thousand men were slain on the one side, and the other, deserves only to be ranked in the file of historical

tions. How did Attila, conquered in Campania, go to take Aquileia? Campania is not assuredly the road to Aquileia in Friuli. No person has yet given us an historical detail of those unhappy times: all that we know of them, is, that the Barbarians came from the borders of the Palus-Meotides, and from the Boristhenes; that they passed into Illyria, entered Italy, by Tiral, and ravaged it throughout: they surmounted the Apennine, and the Alps, and penetrated from the Rhine, to the Danube.

Corneille, in this tragedy of Attila, introduced Hildione, a princess, and sister of a pretending king of France. She was called Hildecone in the first representation, but he afterwards changed this ridiculous name. Merouée, her pretending brother, was never king of France, but was at the head of a little barbarous nation towards Mayence, Frankfort, and Cologne. Corneille says:

“ Que le grand Mérouée est un roi magnanime,

“ Amoureux de la gloire, ardent après l'estime,

“ Qu'il à déjà soumis et la Seine, et la Loire.”

Merouée the great is powerful, and magnanimous,

Amorous of glory, and of fame impatient;

Already has he conquered both the Seine and Loire.

These fictions might be permitted in tragedy, but it is necessary, that these fictions should be interesting.

THE BERENICE OF RACINE, 1670.

A LOVER and his mistress, who forsake one another, do not, certainly, make a proper subject for tragedy. If any one had proposed such a fable to Sophocles, or to Euripides, they would have sent it to the facetious Aristophanes. Love, which is merely simple, and which does not rise to the terrible
and

and deadly passion, is only proper for the comedy, the pastoral, or the eclogue.

When Henrietta, of England, sister-in-law to Louis XIV. wished that Racine and Corneille should each compose a tragedy on the parting of Titus and Berenice, she believed that a conquest obtained over the truest, and most tender love, would ennoble the subject, and in this she was not deceived. But she had, at the same time, a secret interest in wishing to see this victory represented on the theatre.—She remembered the regard she had long entertained for Louis XIV. and the very lively affection of that prince for her.—The danger of this passion—the fear of creating disturbance in the royal family—the names of brother, and sister-in-law, were all curbs to their desire; but in their hearts there still remained a secret inclination, and they were still dear to one another.

This was the ground-work of the plan that she wished to see wrought into a tragedy, and represented on the theatre, as much for her consolation as her amusement. She charged the Marquis de Dangeau, the confidant of her amour with the king, secretly and separately to engage Corneille and Racine, to treat this subject, though it appeared so ineligible for the stage. The two pieces were composed in the year 1670, without either of the authors knowing that he had a rival.

They were performed at the same time, towards the end of that year. The piece of Racine at the Hotel de Bourgogne, and that of Corneille at the Palace Royal.

It is astonishing that Corneille fell into this snare. He ought to have known that the subject was opposite to his talent.

The piece of Corneille failed—that of Racine run thirty nights without intermission; and from that time to this day, when an actor and an actress can be found capable of entering, with interest, into the parts of Titus and Berenice, it hath ever excited the truest applause—that of tears.

Racine was well repaid, by the success of *Berenice*, for the fall of *Britannicus*. This excellent piece had failed with the public, because it had appeared a little cold. The fifth act above all had this fault; and the return of Nero with Junia, and his justifying himself for the death of *Britannicus*, produced, they said, a very bad effect. Nero, when he skulks behind the Arras, for the purpose of listening, appears no longer with the dignity of a Roman Emperor. The two lovers, of whom one is detected kneeling to the other, form an incident more comic than tragical. The interests of *Agrippina*, which ought to attach us principally, do not appear enough important. *Narcissus* was only odious, and *Britannicus* and Junia were regarded as feeble characters. Soon, however, the critics edified and corrected the public judgment. They saw that this piece was a faithful picture of the court of Nero. They discovered, and they admired in it, the energy of *Tacitus*, expressed in a language worthy of *Virgil*. They saw that *Britannicus* and Junia ought not to have any other characters. They were sensible of the true and substantial beauties of *Agrippina*, which were neither extravagant nor unnatural, and which did not extort applause by bombastic declamation. The delineation of Nero's character was esteemed a masterpiece of writing; that of *Burrus* was even held to be superior, and it was believed that nothing of the kind could be found in all antiquity. *Britannicus* was the favourite piece of the dramatical connoisseurs. They were sensible of its faults, but they were enamoured of its beauties.

Racine passed from the imitation of *Tacitus* to that of *Tibullus*; and he rescued himself from the very intricate situation into which he was thrown, by an effort of art, and by that enchanting magic of style, which nature had made peculiarly his own.

Never, to that instant, was the merit of surmounting a difficulty so clearly understood. The difficulty was extreme. The materials, in their uttermost extent, did not seem capable of furnishing more than two or
three

three scenes, and he was forced to work them into five acts.

I shall not give any commentary on the tragedy of Corneille. Whoever peruses the piece will acknowledge it deserves none. But the *Berenice* of Racine claims our strictest regard, and therefore we have given it in preference to Corneille's. Our readers ought to believe that nothing can be worthy their pursuit, but what may be useful if attained. It is not for the sake of Corneille nor of Racine that we write, but to promote the art they professed, and to instruct the lovers of that art—difficult and intricate, in its nature, as it is.

We ought not to entertain prejudice for a name. What signifies it who is the author of that *Berenice* which we read with pleasure, or of that which we read with pain. It is the work, and not the person, that interests posterity; and all party spirit ought to give precedence to our desire of instruction.

PULCHERIA, 1672.

PULCHERIA was a daughter of the Emperor Arcadius, and the Empress Eudoxia, and she had all the ambition of her mother. Corneille tells us, in his epistle to the reader, that her talents were astonishing, and that at the age of fifteen years, “she encroached upon the empire of her brother.” It is true that this brother, Theodosius the second, was so weak a man, that he was, for a long time, governed by this imperious sister, more capable, as he was, of intrigues than of public affairs—more concerned for the support of his credit, than the defence of his empire; and not having any ministers in his cabinet, who were not slaves destitute of all courage.

It was in his time, also, that the people of the North ravaged the Roman empire. This princess, after the death of Theodosius the younger, married an old officer, as incapable of governing as Theodosius. She made him her principal domestic, under the name of Emperor. He was a man who knew not how to conduct himself either in peace or war. He had been a long time prisoner to Genserich, and after he had mounted the throne, he attended to, and concerned himself, with nothing but the disputes of the Euticheans and the Nestorians. We cannot withhold our indignation, when we read in the continuation of Echard's Roman History, a panegyric on Pulcheria and Martian. "Pulcheria," says the author, "whose virtues deservedly gained her the esteem, and the confidence of all the empire, offered the crown to Martian, provided that he would marry her, and yet permit her to preserve inviolate her vows of virginity."

What meanness! he ought to have said—provided he would permit her to continue faithful to her vows of ambition and avarice. She was fifty years of age, and Martian was seventy.

It is permitted to a poet, to ennoble his characters, and to make alterations in history, especially in the history of those times of obscurity and fable. Corneille, at first, called this piece a Tragedy, and he presented it to the comedians, who refused to perform it. They felt more for their own interest than for the reputation of Corneille, and he was obliged to give it to a pitiful troop that played at Marais, and who were unable to support it. Unhappily also for Pulcheria, the tragedy of Mithridates came out, nearly, at the same time; the former being performed on the close of 1672, and the latter in the beginning of 1673.

Fontenelle pretends that his uncle, Corneille, gives his own likeness with a great degree of truth, in the portrait of Martian. Let us see how Martian speaks of himself in the first scene of the second act:

" J'aimais

- " J'aimais quand j'étais jeune, et ne déplaisais guère :
 " Quelquefois de soi même on cherchait à me plaire ;
 " Je pouvais aspirer au cœur le mieux placé ;
 " Mais, hélas ! j'étais jeune, et ce tems est passé.
 " Le souvenir en tue, et l'on ne l'envifage
 " Qu'avec, s'il le faut dire, une espèce de rage.
 " On le repousse, on fait cent projets superflus ;
 " Le trait qu'on porte au cœur s'enfonce d'autant plus ;
 " Et ce feu que de honte en s'obstine à contraindre.
 " Redouble par l'effort qu'on se fait pour l'éteindre."

When I was young, I loved and still was blest :
 Often, unfought, the nymphs would strive to please me,
 And to the highest of them all I made pretence.
 I then was young—Alas ! that time is past,
 And I'm distracted.—I recall the scene,
 To my remembrance with a kind of passion.—
 In vain I drive it back—it still pursues me,
 And rankles in my bosom more and more,
 This fire, that I persist in vain to smother,
 Collects fresh fuel from the means I take.

Had these verses been put into the mouth of an old shepherd, instead of an old soldier, however manly they may appear to Fontenelle, they would yet in our estimation have possessed the same insignificancy. In fine Pulcheria espouses Martian. One Aspar is astonished at it—"What," says he, "old and debilitated as he is?" Pulcheria answers,—“Old and debilitated as he is—“I marry him—he pleases me—I have my reasons.”

This Pulcheria, who says to Leon,—“I am severely “virtuous :” expresses herself too often like the Abigail or the waiting woman of a comedy.

- " Je vois entrer Irène ; Aspar la trouve belle
 " Faites agir pour vous l'amour qu'il a pour elle.
 " Et comme en ce dessein rien n'est à négliger
 " Voyez ce qu'une sœur vous pourra ménager.

- " Vous aimez, vous plaisez ; c'est tout auprès des femmes
 " C'est par là qu'on surprend, qu'on enlève leurs ames.

- " Aspar vous aura vue, et son ame est chagrine,
 " Il m'a vue, et je vue quel chagrin le domine
 " Mais il n'a pas laissé de me faire juger
 " Du choix que fait mon cœur quel sera le danger

" Il part de bons avis quelquefois de la haine.
 " On peut tirer du fruit de tout ce qui fait peine ;
 " Et des plus grands desseins qui veut venir à bout,
 " Prête l'oreille à tous, et fait profit de tout."

I see Irene enter—Aspar meets her—
 And pleads for you the love he feels himself.
 In your behalf, each art will be attempted,
 And use me, as a sister, moulded to your will.

You love and court her—that's the charm
 Which strikes, and ravishes the female heart.

Aspar, you shall see what torments he endures ;
 I have seen and marked them.
 But he would not give me leave to judge
 What danger may pursue the choice I've made.
 With some aversion, did he hear my counsel ;
 He takes the fruit of what e'en gives him pain ;
 And for the great design he wishes to accomplish,
 He lends an ear to all—and gains by all.

It is thus that this piece is written. The materials are worthy of being thrown into shape ; they consist of a ridiculous marriage, ridiculously thwarted, and that ends ridiculously.

The intrigue of the piece, its stile, and its very poor success, determined Corneille, at last, not to give it any other name than that of a " Heroic Comedy," but there being nothing either comic or heroic in the piece, it was truly difficult to give it any name that it deserved.

It appears, however, that if Corneille had made choice of subjects more worthy of the tragic drama, he would have been able to treat them more successfully, and to have recalled a remnant of that genius that had now forsook him. Of this we may judge from the opening of Pulcheria's character.

" Je vous aime, Léon, et n'en fais point mystère,
 " Des feux tels que les miens n'ont rien qu'il faille taire.
 " Je vous aime, et non pas de cette folle ardeur
 " Que les yeux éblouis font maîtresse du cœur

" Non

" Non d'un amour conçu par le sens en tumulte,
 " A qui l'ame applaudit sans qu'elle se consulte
 " Et qui ne concevant que d'aveugles desirs
 " Languit dans les faveurs, et meurt dans les plaisirs.

I love you, Leon—nor can it be conceal'd—
 A flame, like mine, bursts every bar of silence.—
 I love you, Leon—nor is't my passion's phrenzy,
 But your transparent worth that rules my heart;—
 'Tis not a love, bred on tumultuous sense,
 That my soul approves, without examination;—
 And which, composed, alone, of blind desires,
 Languishes in joy, and dies upon fruition.

These opening verses are, in truth, deceitful—They are well written, there is not one fault against the language, and they prove that Corneille was yet capable of writing with force and purity, had he been more attentive to his subjects. In the mean time the critics of taste and experience, truly judged that these excellent verses were but the fascinating harbingers of a clay-cold piece. If Pulcheria did really feel the affection she professed, her love deserved not to affect the hearer. They perceived, however, that the poet spoke here, and not the princess, a fault into which Corneille always fell. What princess would ever disclose her affection, by saying that "Love languished in favour, and died upon fruition?" What idea do not these verses give of voluptuousness, that Pulcheria ought not to be acquainted with? At the same time Pulcheria only repeats here what Viriate had said in the tragedy of *Sertorius*.

" Ce ne sont pas les sens que mon amour consulte—
 " Il trait des passions l'impétueux tumulte.

These are not the senses that my love consults—
 It hates the tumults of impure desire.

There are in this verse the beauties of just declamation, and of sentiment that is truly pure.

This

This piece fell, for the same fault, as *Otho*. Three rivals contend for the hand of the niece of *Otho*; and here we see three pretenders to *Pulcheria*. There is no great intrigue, no considerable incident, and hardly one character, in which we are interested. There are some good verses in *Otho*, but this merit is wanting in *Pulcheria*. They speak of love in a manner, that would, if it were possible, disgust us with the passion. Why, in the name of common sense, did *Corneille* persist to treat on subjects of love? His heroic comedy of *Titus and Berenice*, should have taught him, that he was incapable of writing on love; or rather, that he ought not to write more on any dramatic subject: *solve fenscentem*. He would needs introduce love, into every piece; and after *Polyeuctes*, it dwindled into mere contracts of marriage; chains of negotiations, pending through five acts, on the interests of parties; or nice and subtle reasonings on the rights of true lovers. In regard to style, although he was the means of perfecting it in France, he grew worse and worse in that respect every day. In the first scene of this piece, he says, "C'est l'habitude à regner et l'horreur d'en dechoir:" The habit of reigning renders it tormenting to lose it. "C'est un penchant flatteur qui fait des assurances:" He is a friendly flatterer that gives assurances. These are "des hauts faits qui portent à grands pas à l'empire:"—the high acts that lead to empire.

The old and decrepid *Martian* having recounted his intrigues to his daughter *Justina*, he says to her, "Come, let us also talk of your's. C'est mon tour d'écouter." It is now my turn to listen. The dutiful and the good *Justina* tells him, how she fell in love: "Et comment son imprudente ardeur prête à s'évaporer respecte sa pudeur." And how her imprudent passion made her almost lose respect for her chastity.

They are incessantly making love to *Pulcheria*, who is fifty years of age. She loves a prince named *Leon*, and she beseeches a lady of her court to make love to *Leon*, to the end that she, the empress, may disengage herself:

"Qu'il

"Qu'il est fort cet amour ! sauve-m'en si tu peux—

"Voi Léon, parle lui, dérobe moi ses vœux ;

"M'en faire un prompt larcin, c'est me rendre service."

How ardent is my flame ! oh, save me if you can—

See Leon,—speak to him—strip me of my wishes ;

Quickly commit the robbery, and do me service.

Such verses may be fit for a bad comedy, but such sentiments are altogether unworthy of tragedy.

But what shall we say of the wrinkled Martian, enamoured of the old Pulcheria ? The empress begins a very pleasant conversation with him in the fifth act.

"On m'a dit que pour moi vous aviez de l'amour.

"Seigneur, ferait-il vrai ?

"MARTIAN.

"Qui vous l'a dit, madame ?

"PULCHERIE.

"Vos services, mes yeux."

I'm told that you've conceived a passion for me.

Is it so, my lord ?

MARTIAN.

Who said so, lady ?

PULCHERIE.

Your friends, my eyes.

To which the good man answers : "Qu'il s'est tû, après s'être rendu, qu'en effet il languit, il soupire, mais qu'enfin la langueur qu'en voit sur son visage est encor plus l'effet de l'amour que de l'âge." That he is dying, almost giving up the ghost ; that he languishes and sighs ; but that the langour she sees in his face, is more the effect of love than of age.

I am better pleased with, I know not what farce, in which an old man is seized with a violent fit of coughing before his mistress, and who says to her, "Ma-

"dame, damoiselle,

"dameiselle, c'est d'amour que je touffe." Madam, it is love that makes me cough.

I think, without comparison, that the Pradons, the Bonnecorsets, the Corras, the Danchets, never made any thing, so low and ridiculous, as are all the latter pieces of Corneille. But I dare not say so, without proving it.

Corneille lamenting, in one of his letters, the success of his rival, concludes by saying,

"Et la seule tendresse est toujours a-la-mode."

And *tenderness* alone is now in fashion.

Yes, the tenderness of Racine, the true pathetic tenderness, expressed in a style equal to that of the fourth book of Virgil, and not a false, and a cold tenderness, badly and improperly expressed.

Few people have remarked, that Racine, in treating love subjects, has perfectly observed this precept of Despreaux :

"Qu' Achille aime autrement que Tircis et Philène,
"Et que l'amour souvent de remords combattu,
"Paraisse une faiblesse, et non une vertu."

That Achilles feels other love than Tircis and Philena—and that love, battling with remorse, Appears a *weakness* often, not a *virtue*.

The part of Mithridates, by the same author, is indeed, a little ridiculous. An old man, jealous of his children, is a true character of comedy ; and the manner, in which he forces the secret from Monimia, is little and ignoble. He tells it afterwards to others, and nothing is more true or natural. But yet the foundation of the part is rich and noble. Mithridates is sensible of his faults, and reproaches himself for his weakness with dignity :

"Quoi ? des plus chères mains craignant les trahisons,
"J'ai pris soin de m'armer contre tous les poisons ?
"J'ai su par une longue et pénible industrie,
"Des plus mortels venins prévenir la furie ?

"Ah !

“ Ah! qu'il eût mieux valu, plus sage et plus heureux,
 Et repoussant les traits d'un amour dangereux,
 Ne pas laisser remplir d'ardeurs empoisonnées
 “ Un cœur déjà glacé par le poid des années.”

Why? fearing, in the dearest hands, a dagger,
 Have I not arm'd myself against its poison?
 And, with great pains, at length, secured myself,
 From all the fury of envenomed men?
 Oh! more politic and happy, had it been,
 Repulsing the attacks of dangerous love,
 From poisonous and conflicting passion, I have freed
 A heart that's frozen with the cold of years.

When a man reproaches himself, with so much force,
 and dignity, in a language so sublime, and natural, we
 pardon, and forget his foibles.

Thus does Roxana treat herself:

“ Tu pleures, Malheureuse! Ah! tu devais pleurer,
 “ Lorsque d'un vain desir à la perte poussée,
 “ Tu conçus de le voir la première pensée.”

You weep, unhappy one! Ah! thou deserve'st to weep,
 Since, struck, to thy misfortune, with a vain desire,
 Thou fancied'st to thyself that thou wert lov'd.

We do not see, in these excellent works, “ heroes,
 “ who entertain your gentle flames in their bosoms.”
 “ A princess enamoured of reputation, who when she
 “ says she loves, is sure of being beloved.” There we
 do not hear “ any fulsome compliment, made more in
 “ the spirit of flattery, than of love.” “ The absence
 “ of true lovers is not there esteemed worse than death
 “ or pestilence.” No hero says there, as in Alcibiades,
 “ that when he has won the affections of a young heart,
 “ he has a hundred times proved, that a man can ex-
 “ ult in the accomplishment of his ends.” Phedrus,
 in his admirable part, the *chef-d'œuvre* of human ge-
 nius, and the eternal, tho' inimitable model of what-
 ever is to be written in verse. Phedrus more severely
 reproaches himself, than the most austere husband
 could

could possibly have done. It is thus then that we ought to speak of love, or not to speak of it at all.

It is above all on reading this part of Phedrus, that we exclaim with Despreaux:

“ Eh! qui voyant un jour l'a douleur vertueuse
 “ De Phédre, malgré soi perfide, incestueuse,
 “ D'un si juste travail noblement étonné,
 “ Ne bénira d'abord le siècle fortuné,
 “ Qui rendu plus fameux par tes illustres veilles,
 “ Vit naître sous ta main ces pompeuses merveilles.”

Who can the virtuous pangs of Phedrus hear,
 While incest's images his bosom tear;
 And sail, astonished at a scene so great,
 To praise the virtues of that glorious state,
 Where, ambitious of the fame their fathers won,
 The wond'rous deeds descend from son to son.

These wonders were more affecting than pompous. How much are they deceived who say, and labour to prove, that Racine hath weakened the drama by his *tendernefs*; infomuch that it is this *tendernefs* alone, that hath purified the theatre, infected, as it always was before, and almost always, indeed, after him, with false, cold, and ridiculous amours, that dishonoured the most serious subjects of antiquity. He that condemns the manner in which Racine treats subjects of love, must also condemn the fourth book of Virgil. If there is any thing that we can justly blame in him, it is, that he has not always introduced those grand tragical emotions, those whirlwinds of the soul, and starts of which the passion is susceptible. If he has not given all the *violence*, we ought to rest contented with the *elegance* of love. He only strove to *affect*, when it was in his power to have *torn* our hearts; and it must be granted, that he was generally feeble in the latter acts of his pieces. Such as he is, however, I believe him to be the most perfect of all our poets; and, since his time, so difficult is the art, that we have hardly seen one good tragedy. There are, indeed, a few, since he lived, in which the critics have discovered *beauties*; but before

fore he wrote, we have not one piece, that is well written from the beginning to the end. The author of this commentary has the greater right to assert this truth, because he has had experience in the school of tragedy; has felt its difficulties, and is forced to acknowledge, that he has himself produced nothing that he esteems to be above mediocrity.

Of those who have painted love in striking colours, Racine hath not been singular in treating it almost at all times, as an unhappy and a tragical passion; Quinault also in his Opera, believed it necessary to describe it so.

Armide begins, by wishing to destroy Renaud, the enemy of her sect:

"Le vainqueur de Renaud, si quelqu'un le peut être

"Sera digne de moi."

The conqueror of Renaud, whoe'er he is
Shall I think worthy of me.

She loved him in spite of herself; her haughty virtue was not sufficient to controul it; nor could she, though she strove, conceal it from the world. She called on *hatred* to assist her:

"Venez, haine implacable!

"Sortez du gouffre épouvantable,

"Où vous faites régner une éternelle horreur.

"Sauvez-moi de l'amour, rien n'est si redoutable;

"Rendez-moi mon corroux, rendez-moi ma fureur

"Contre un ennemi trop aimable."

Come, implacable hate!

Arise from thy gulph of affright,

Where thou reign'st in the horrors of night,

And save me from love, the dispenser of woe!—

On my call, bid thy *furies* await;

My bosom with thy rage inflate

To blast my lovely foe.

There is even a moral in this opera; for the *bate* that Armida invokes, says to her:

" Je ne puis te punir d'une plus rude peine,
 " Que de t'abandonner pour jamais à l'amour."

I cannot well inflict a ruder pain,
 Than by condemning thee for e'er to love.

So soon as Renaud regards himself as the symbolic
 mirror which they represent him,—he detests himself,
 and exclaims

" Ciel, quelle honte de paraître
 " Dans l'indigne état où je suis !"

Oh heaven!—what shame it is to appear
 In a character so unworthy!

He abandons his mistress for his duty without hesi-
 tation. The instances of wanton immorality, that
 Boileau reproaches in Quinault, are only to be found
 in the mouths of those artful seducers, who contribute
 to the fall of Renaud.

If we examine the excellent operas of this author,
 Armida, Roland, Atis, Theseus, and Amadis, we
 shall find love to be described, as tragical and unhappy.
 This is a truth that few of the critics have discovered;
 because, nothing is more rare, than for critics to exa-
 mine the works on which they decide.

Is there any thing, for example, more truly noble
 and excellent than this verse of Amadis?

" J'ai choisi la gloire pour guide;
 " J'ai prétendu marcher sur les traces d'Alcide,
 " Heureux, si j'avais évité
 " Le charme trop fatal dont il fut enchanté!
 " Son cœur n'eut que trop de tendresse.
 " Je suis tombé dans son malheur;
 " J'ai mal imité sa valeur,
 " J'imité trop bien sa faiblesse."

Glory, I chose as my guide;
 And strove to follow where Alcides led,
 Happy, if I descried, and fled
 The fatal charm, by which the hero died.
 His tender heart knew nought but meekness,
 His sad misfortune is my fate;

His

His strength I do not imitate,
But well I've caught his weakness.

And does not Medea, herself, pay homage to the virtue she determines to avoid, in the following well known verse.

"Le destin de Médée est d'être criminelle,
"Mais son cœur était né pour aimer la vertu."

Medea's fate decrees her for a guilty wretch,
And yet her heart was form'd to cherish virtue.

We would refer our reader to M. Marmontel's poetical essay on Quinault, and the rules of tragedy. A work replete with taste, argument, and science.

These reflections might have been placed before any other piece as well as Pulcheria; but they presented themselves here, and they diverted, for a moment, the author's attention, from that distressing anxiety, which he feels on re-publishing those pieces that Corneille ought to have suppressed; which though they take nothing from the beauties and the excellencies of his good works, are yet difficult to be understood, and ranked as his.

S U R E N A,

GENERAL OF THE PARTHIANS, 1674.

SURENA is not a proper name, but a title of honour, a name of dignity; and signified among the Parthians, what Ethmadoulet does among the Persians, at this day,—or the Grand-Vizir among the Turks. This mistake resembles that, in many of our own writings, where they speak of an Azem, Grand-Vizir of the Ottoman-Porte, not knowing that the Vizir-Azem signifies the Grand-Vizir. But the mistake is much more pardonable in Corneille, than in the historians;

since the history of the Parthians is less known to us, than that of the modern Persians and Turks.

The tragedy of *Surena* was performed at the latter end of 1674, and the beginning of 1675. The subject is, altogether, a love story; and it should seem, that Corneille meant to enter the lists against Racine. That great man had produced his *Iphigenia* in the course of the same year 1674; and, I confess, that I must regard that piece, as the *chef-d'œuvre* of the drama, and subscribe to the beautiful verse of Despreaux:

“ Jamais Iphigénie en Aulide immolée,
 “ Ne coûta tant de pleurs à la Grèce assemblée
 “ Que dans l'heureux spectacle à nos yeux étalé,
 “ En à fait sous ton nom verser la champmêlé.”

Not when, in Aulis, Iphigene was laid,
 Were Grecian tears of woe so amply paid;
 As lately, in our theatres, have been,
 When the sad tale enrich'd the mimic scene.

Would we behold true grandeur? we may find it in Achilles, such as it ought to be represented, elevated and impassioned, without bombast, and without declamation. Would we behold true policy? the whole part of Ulysses is full of it; a perfect policy, uniformly founded on the love of his country, and the welfare of his people, wise and noble; never at variance with itself, but constantly adding to the dignity, and the terror of the scene. Clytemnestra is the model of the grand pathetic; and Iphigenia that of noble interesting simplicity. Agamemnon is just what he ought to be. And what a stile! It is the true, the very sublime.

After *Surena*, Peter Corneille renounced the stage, which he ought to have done much sooner. He survived this piece almost ten years, and was a witness of the deserved success of his rival; at the same time, that he had the consolation, of seeing his former pieces represented with applause continually new. To the beauties of his former pieces, we intreat our readers to re-

vert,

vert, where they may remark, that every sentiment which is well conceived, is beautifully expressed, a few obsolete phrases, and terms excepted; that he never is obscure, high-flown, unintelligible, incorrect, feeble, and insipid; but where he writes unsupported by the vigour, and the beauty of his subject. All that ever he expressed badly, deserved not even to be printed. He wrote very unequally, but I am not convinced that he possessed an unequal genius, as it is said; because, I see him always, both in his best, and his worst pieces, adhere strictly to the solidity of reason, to the strength and the extent of ideas, almost always more attentive, and, seemingly, more inclined to discourse, than to affect: full of resources, and incidents, even in subjects the most ungrateful; but of resources, often, I confess, little fitted for tragedy; choosing badly, as he did, every subject after *Œdipus*. Inventing intrigues, but intrigues little, cold, insipid, and lifeless; using a bad style, because he wrote with rapidity, and striving even to deceive himself, in his latter pieces. His great merit is, that he found France vulgar, gross, and ignorant; without genius, and without taste, at the time of the first representation of the *Cid*, and that he enlightened and refined it. I advance this, because the genius, that prevails in the theatre, is a faithful image of the genius of the nation. So that we, not only, are indebted to Corneille for tragedy and comedy, but we also are obliged to him for the art of thinking.

He did not possess the pathetic of the Greek stage, not having ever given us an idea of it but in the last act of *Rhodogune*. The winding up of that act appears to me, with all its faults, to be infinitely superior to every thing, that we admire in Greece. The catastrophe of the fifth act of *Athalie* is in the same great taste, but it must be owned that the latter acts of his other pieces, without exception, are bare, tattered, and weak, in comparison with these. If you except these two affecting scenes, our French tragedies have been too often the recital of dialogues, more than the exhibition of pathetic actions. It is here, that we are principally deficient:

but with this fault, and some others to which the necessity of winding a plot into five acts, subjects the poet; I assert that the French Drama is superior to that of all other nations, ancient and modern. This art is absolutely necessary in a great city such as Paris; yet before Corneille it did not exist, and after Racine it appears impossible that it should grow better.

It is not more easy to make a commentary on the piece of *Surena*, than on *Agefilaus*, *Attila*, *Pulcheria*, *Pertharites*, *Titus*, and *Berenice*, the *Golden Fleece*, or *Theodore*. If I have made some reflections upon *Otho*, it is, in effect, owing to those fine verses, with which the first scene is enriched, and which, in some degree, support the commentator in his ungrateful and uncouth task. I shall conclude by saying that we ought not to examine any work that possesses not a mixture of beauties and faults; to the end that we may teach youth to avoid the one, and imitate the other; but for pieces, as badly invented as they are poorly written, where the innumerable faults cannot be overbalanced by the excellencies of only one scene, it is totally useless to comment on what we cannot read.

I shall only add one observation here, which I have often before hinted;—the older that Corneille grew, the more did he persist in treating subjects of love, and enraged and piqued at succeeding so ill he complained, “That tenderness alone was now the mode.” Age, in common, disdains the weaknesses that it is no more capable of entertaining. The genius contracts a severe solidity, which extends even to rudeness; but Corneille, on the contrary, introduced into his latter works, more gallantry than ever. And what gallantry! perhaps he wished to enter the lists against Racine, in whom he perceived, though against his will, that prodigious superiority, in this difficult art, which rendered the passion so noble, so tragical and so interesting. He said—“That neither *Otho* nor *Surena* were unworthy younger brothers of *Cinna*.”—They were held, however, as very unworthy brothers. *Pacorus* and

and Euridice, Palmis and the Surena, speak of love as the rabble of Paris do.

“ Si le merite est grand ; l'estime est un peu forte.
 “ Vous la pardonnerez à l'amour qui m'emporte.
 “ Comme vous le forcez à se trop expliquer,
 “ S'il manque de respect vous l'en faites manquer.
 “ Il est si naturel d'estimer ce qu'on aime,
 “ Qu'on voudrait que partout on l'estimât de même.
 “ Et la pente est si douce à vanter ce qu'il vaut
 “ Que jamais on ne craint de l'élever trop haut.”

When our merit's great, we do esteem our merits :—
 You'll pardon me, in the conflict I endure,
 If, as you force me to be so explicit,
 I should want respect—you are the only cause.—
 It is so natural to esteem what we approve ;
 That, above all, we do esteem ourselves :
 And, so great the bliss, of praising what we love,
 That we ne'er fear exalting it over high.

It is in this ridiculous stile that Corneille made love, in his last twenty tragedies, and even in some of his former ones.—He that does not perceive this fault is destitute of all taste ; and he that attempts to justify it, wilfully deceives himself.—Those who charge it as a crime upon me, for being so severe, have forced me to be just, and not to soften nor palliate a single truth. I owe nothing to those who are prejudiced against me, nor am I accountable to any person for what I have done, for the descendant of Corneille, and for what I have done, to please my own taste. I know better to prize the true beauties of this great genius than those do, who affect to love his faults. I feel from the heart every excellency of his pen : but they shall not impose on me silence, of any kind, on that which appears to me defective.

My motto has always been, “ *Fari quæ sentiat.*”

A R I A N E,

OF THOMAS CORNEILLE, 1672.

A GREAT many lovers of the drama, having demanded of me the reason of joining, to the works of Peter Corneille, the Ariane and the Effex of Thomas Corneille his brother, accompanied also by commentaries, I cannot refuse to satisfy them.

Thomas Corneille was a younger brother of Peter's by almost twenty years. He produced thirty-three dramatic pieces as well as his brother. They were not all fortunate; but Ariane had prodigious success in 1672, and almost balanced, in reputation, the Bajazet of Racine, which was performed at the same time: although assuredly Ariane did not approach near to Bajazet in excellence, yet the subject was happy. Men, ingrateful as they are, at all times interest themselves in the misfortune of a tender female, abandoned by an ingrate. And women, who discover their own portraits in this picture, weep for themselves.

Hardly one person examines, during the representation of a piece, whether it is well composed, and well written or not. He is affected—he has been pleased during the hour—the pleasure itself is rare, and the scrutiny is left to the connoisseur.

They assert in the "Bibliothèque des Theatres," that Ariane was written in forty days. I am not astonished at this rapidity, in a man accustomed to versification, and who was full of his subject. It is possible to proceed very hastily when a man permits prosaic verses to escape him, and sacrifices all his characters to one alone. This piece is in the list of plays, that are performed frequently because an actress wishes to distinguish herself in a part capable, in the language of
the

the theatre, of being made much of. The situation is truly affecting. A woman who had done all for Theseus; who snatched him from the greatest peril; who sacrificed herself for him; who believed that she was beloved, and who deserved to be so; who saw herself betrayed by her sister, and abandoned by her lover; is one of the most happy subjects of antiquity. It is much more interesting than the Dido of Virgil; for Dido did much less for Æneas, and she is not betrayed by her sister; she did not experience his infidelity, and there is not, perhaps, to be found a just cause for her conflicting rage.

It is needless to add, that this subject pleased infinitely more than that of Medea. A poisoner and a murderer could not affect such hearts and spirits as were finely formed.

Thomas Corneille was more happy in the choice of this subject than his brother had been, in any of his, after Rhodogune, but I think that Peter Corneille, would have painted the part of Ariane better than his brother. We may remark, on reading this tragedy, that he has fewer solecisms and absurdities, than are to be found in the latter productions of Peter Corneille. The younger brother had not the force and the profound genius of the elder, but he spoke his language with more purity, though with more weakness. He was besides, a man of very great merit, and of vast literature; and, if you except Racine, to whom there can be no comparison, he was the only man of his time, worthy of standing next to his brother.

THE EARL OF ESSEX,

OF THOMAS CORNEILLE, 1678.

THE death of the Earl of Essex has been the subject of some tragedies in France, as well as in England. La Calprenède was the first who introduced this subject on the stage in 1632. His piece had great success. The Abbé Boyer, a long time after, treated the same subject differently, in 1672. His piece was more regular, but it was cold, and it perished. Thomas Corneille gave his tragedy of the Earl of Essex in 1678. It is the only one of them which is performed at times now. Neither of these three authors attached themselves closely to the history.

*Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.*

But this liberty hath its boundary, as hath indeed every other species of liberty. It will not be amiss to give, in this place, a short recital of that event.

Elizabeth, Queen of England, who reigned with much prudence and prosperity, formed for the basis of her conduct, after she was settled on the throne, the design of living unmarried, and of never submitting to a lover. She loved to please, and she was not insensible of pleasure. Robert Dudley, son to the Duke of Northumberland, inspired her, of a sudden, with an inclination towards him, and he was esteemed for a time, an avowed favourite, without being a happy lover.

The Earl of Leicester succeeded in favour to Dudley, and in fine, after the death of Leicester, Robert D'Evreux, Earl of Essex, was in her good graces. He was son to the Earl of Essex, and created, by the Queen, Earl Marshal of Ireland. This family was originally
from

from Normandy, as the name D'Evreux fully testifies. It takes its rise from the town of Evreux, which, originally, belonged to this house. It had been created an earldom by Richard I. Duke of Normandy, for one of his sons, named Robert, archbishop of Rouen, who being an archbishop, married himself solemnly to a damsel named Herleve. Of this marriage, which courtly approved of, was born a daughter, who carried the Earldom of Evreux into the house of Montfort. Philip-Augustus acquired Evreux in 1200 by negociation; the Earldom was added to the crown, and afterwards ceded, in full propriety, in 1651, by Louis XIV. to the house of the "Tour d'Auvergne de Bouillon." The house of Essex was descended from a subaltern officer, a native of Evreux, who followed William the bastard, to the conquest of England, and who took the name of the town where he was born: never did Evreux belong to this family, as some people have believed. The first of this house who was Earl of Essex, was Walter D'Evreux, father to the favourite of Elizabeth; and this favourite, named William, left a son, who was very unfortunate, and in whom the house became extinct.

This trifling observation is only for those who love historical researches, and has no relation to the tragedy which we now examine.

The young William, Earl of Essex, who makes the subject of the piece, being one day presented to the Queen, as she was going to walk in the garden, he saw a place in the passage full of dirt, and pulling from his shoulders a very fine cloak embroidered with gold, he threw it on the ground, and spread it beneath the feet of the Queen. She was struck with this piece of gallantry. He who had performed it was of a noble and graceful figure, and appeared in the court with much splendour. The Queen, fifty-eight years old, conceived a passion for him, which her age sheltered her from the suspicion of. He was as remarkable for his courage and towering spirit, as for his elegant mien. He requested permission to go and conquer, at his own expence;

expenſe, a canton of Ireland; and he ſignalized himſelf, frequently, as a volunteer. He revived the ancient ſpirit of chivalry, carrying always in his bonnet, a glove of the queen Elizabeth. It was he, who commanding the Engliſh troops at the ſiege of Rouen, propoſed a duel to the Admiral de Villars-Brancas, who defended the place, in order to prove, ſaid he, in his cartel, that his miſtreſs was more beautiful than the Admiral's. He could not mean any other lady, by this, than the queen Elizabeth, whoſe age, and extravagant noſe were not the moſt powerful charms. The Admiral answered, that he cared very little, whether his miſtreſs was beautiful, or ugly; but he would take care to prevent him from entering Rouen. He defended the place very well, and made the other his ſcorn.

The queen made him great Maſter of Artillery, gave to him the order of the garter, and introduced him into her privy counſel. He poſſeſſed, for ſome time, great credit; but he never performed any memorable action; and when in 1599, he went to Ireland againſt the rebels, at the head of an army of 20,000 men, he permitted this army to waſte away, and periſh, which ought to have ſubdued Ireland, only by making its appearance. Obligated to give an account of ſo bad a conduct, before the council, he only answered by gaiſconades, that would hardly have been tolerated after a happy campaign. The queen, who had ſtill ſome reſpect for him, contented herſelf with removing him from the council-board, ſuſpending the exerciſe of his other dignities, and forbidding him the court. She was ſixty-eight years of age, and it is ridiculous to imagine, that love had the leaſt ſhare in this adventure. The Earl conſpired unworthily againſt his benefactreſs, but the conſpiracy was that of a man, without judgment. He believed that James king of Scotland, the natural heir of Elizabeth, might be able to protect him, and come to dethrone the queen. He flattered himſelf that he had a party in London. We ſee him in the ſtreets, followed by ſome inſenſible people, attached to his fortune,

tune, trying, in vain, to stir up the people. They seized him, and others of his accomplices; he was condemned, and executed, agreeable to the laws, without being lamented by one person. They pretend that he became a devotee in prison, and that a miserable preaching presbyterian, having persuaded him that he would be damned, if he did not accuse all those that were concerned with him in the crime, he was cowardly enough to be their accuser, and to dishonour, by that means, the end of his life. The affection which Elizabeth had entertained for him before, and which she had entertained, in truth, very unworthily, served as a pretext for subjects both to the romance, and the tragedy-writers. They pretend, that she hesitated to sign the order for his execution, when condemned by the peers of the kingdom to die. It is certain, that she did sign it; nothing is more truly proved, and this alone confutes the romances and tragedies.

A N S W E R

TO A DETRACTOR OF CORNEILLE.

SINCE I undertook this edition, * there hath fallen into the hands of the Editor, I know not what book, intituled "Reflexions morales, politiques, historiques, et litteraires sur le theatre," without the author's name, but printed at Avignon, by Marc Chave, printer and bookseller.

The author appears to be one of those fanatics, who begin, after a time, to erect the crest, and declare themselves the enemies of kings, laws, customs, and arts. This man pushed his madness so far, as to treat Corneille with impiety. He says, that the continued parallel, which Corneille draws between the gods and

* An Edition in quarto of the works of Corneille, with the commentaries of Mr. de Voltaire.

men, makes all the sublime of his pieces. He anathematizes the beautiful verses, that Cornelia, on the death of Pompey, addresses to the ashes of her husband:

“Où, je jure des dieux, la puissance suprême,

“Et pour dire encor plus, je jure par vous même,

“Car vous êtes plus cher à ce cœur affligé, &c.”

Yes, I swear by the supreme puissance of the gods,

Or to say more, I swear by thee, thyself,

Who art the dearest god of my idolatry.

And behold how this man expresses himself.

“To place the ashes of her husband, above the
“puissance of the gods, whom she adored, is most
“false, and insensible. This sentiment, twisted and
“turned, is repeated a thousand times in the tragedies
“of Corneille. The fool, who called himself, among
“the ignorant, the eternal father; and the other, who
“believed that he was Jupiter, never spoke more foolishly.”

It is worth while to discover who is the fool here; whether it is the great Corneille, or his detractor? This poor man did not conceive, that “to say more,” did not signify, and could not signify that the remains of Pompey were exalted above the divinity, but that the remains of her husband were dearer to Cornelia, than the gods who had not succoured Pompey. This sentiment, which flowed from the excess of grief, never before displeased any person. Does the detractor pretend, that a man ought upon the theatre, devoutly to adore Jupiter and Venus? What does he pretend? What does he want? And what man like Corneille, or of his merits, imposes on, the ignorant? Let us leave this miserable compiler of ignorant declamations. The contempt which we have for him, is equal to the respect which he has for the great Corneille.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.*

TO MR. D'ALEMBERT,

PERPETUAL SECRETARY TO THE FRENCH
ACADEMY, MEMBER OF THE ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES, &c.

By the Editor of the Tragedy of Don Pedro.

S I R,

YOU are assuredly one of those privileged souls, to whom the author of Don Pedro speaks in his discourse †. You are one of the few men, who are capable of embellishing the spirit of geometry with the spirit of literature. The French Academy did well in choosing you their perpetual secretary, and in paying that homage to your mathematical genius, which was otherwise due to your fine taste and true eloquence. They have judged of you as the Academy of sciences have judged of the Marquis de Condorcet; and the public have therefore, found the greatest reason, to look on these two as respectable associations. You revive those times when the great philosophers of Greece taught the principles of eloquence and dramatic poetry.

Permit me, Sir, to dedicate to you the tragedy of my friend, who being now far distant from France, cannot have the honour of presenting it to you himself. If I place your name at the head of this piece, I shall expect to see it assume an air of true poetry, corrected under your hand, and cleared alike of the obsolete and the common.

The young author finished it under my eye, in the space of a month, at a little village far from all assist-

* We have published this and the following Essay, though not the production of M. de Voltaire, as he has thought proper to admit them into his works, in the commentary he has given on the tragedy of Don Pedro.

† See the historical and critical discourse that follows.

ance,

ance, and where he was only supported by the idea of pleasing you.

Ut caneret paucis ignoto in pulvere verum.

There is no point of ambition in giving this piece to the theatre. He is sensible, that it is no more than a *sketch*, but the likenesses, he hopes, are just. It is, therefore, that he presents it to men of taste. He told me moreover, that success in the representation depended totally on the actor or actress; but that in the closet, it depended on the equitable and strict criticism of a judge and writer, such as you. He knew, that a man of taste, at this day, would neither tolerate a high-flown declamation of rhetoric, nor a nauseous declaration of love to the princess; much less would he suffer those insipid barbarities in Gothic attire, which distract the ear, without ever speaking to the judgement or the heart, two things that can never be separated.

He despaired to be found so correct as the Academy exacts, or so interesting as the boxes may desire. He does not deny the difficulty that he found in composing a piece with characters joined to intrigue, and the still greater difficulty of composing it in verse. For, poetry, Sir, in the modern languages, being deprived of that harmonious measure which it had in the only two good languages of antiquity, can only be supported by the continued purity of style.

We often repeat, together with these two lines of Boileau, that they ought to be the model and the rule for each man who speaks, or who writes.

“ Sans la langue, en un mot, l’auteur le plus divin,
“ Est toujours quoi qu’il fasse, un méchant écrivain.”

When language fails, the poet, tho’ divine,
But lamely rounds the period, and the line,

And we attribute to the default of our language, not only the solecisms and the barbarisms with which the theatre is infected, but also the obscurity, the impropriety,

priety, the insufficiency, the exaggeration, driness and severity, the lowness, bombast and incoherence of our expressions. He that does not uniformly avoid all these stumbling-blocks, will never be accounted among our poets.

It is not for the purpose of instructing the public in the art of writing tolerably in French verse, that I presume to offer his work to the Academy, by dedicating it to you. I have already published a few examples for that purpose, which were presented to these judges, but which the public rarely read.

I demand for the young author, the judgments of all the Academicians, who have assiduously cultivated our language. I begin with the Philosopher, who hath made so true and so eloquent a description of the human body, and who knows the *moral* as well as he hath observed the *physical* man.

I wish for the judgment of that acute Philosopher, who hath discovered the origin of our ideas, without losing sight of our sensibility.

I wish for the judgment of the author of the Siege of Calais, who hath communicated his enthusiasm to the world, and who having himself composed a tragedy of Don Pedro, ought to regard my friend as himself, and not as his rival.

I wish for the judgment of the author of Sparticus, who hath revenged humanity in this piece, replete as it is, with beauties worthy of the great Corneille. For true fame is acquired from the approbation of masters of the art. You have said, that, rarely, a lover of an art, reasons with so much propriety upon it, as an artist *. For my own part, I have always seen, that artists only rendered strict justice to one another—when they were not envious.

“ C’est aux esprits bien faits

“ A voir la vertu pleine en se moindres effets,

“ C’est d’eux seuls qu’on reçoit la véritable gloire †.”

* In his “Essai sur les gens des Lettres.”

† Act 5th of “The Horaces” by Corneille.

VOL. I. *Miscellanies*, G

’Tis

'Tis given alone to spirits, finely form'd
To see full virtue, in its least effects,
And such alone can render true applause.

And I declare, for my own part, I would prefer the single approbation of him, who hath revived the stile of Racine in *Melania*, than to see myself applauded for a month by the common followers of a theatre*.

I present the tragedy of Don Pedro to the Academician, who hath spoken so worthily of Bellisarius in his admirable fifteenth chapter, celebrated alike for virtue the most pure, as for eloquence the most true, and which all the princes ought to study for their instruction, and for our happiness. I submit it to the wise criticisms of those, who in the discourses, honoured with the applause of the Academy, have estimated with so much taste, the merits of the great men who shone in the age of Lewis the XIVth. I rest it entirely on the decision of the celebrated author of the Poem on Painting, who alone hath given us the true rules of that enchanting art, and who knows it, himself, as intimately as he does that of poesy.

I present it to the translator of Virgil, who alone of all who have attempted, is worthy to translate it. To the illustrious author of the *Seasons*, so superior to Thomson, and his subject. All irrefragable judges in the art of poetry, so little understood, and who have been proclaimed to live for ever in the temple of fame, by the voice even of envy itself.

I am persuaded, that the young man, who hath introduced Don Pedro, and Guesclin, into the drama,

* I may venture to say boldly, that I have not seen a piece better written than *Melania*. This merit rare as it is, hath been discovered by strangers who learn our language by its principles and usage. The heir of the greatest monarchy of our hemisphere, was astonished that he could not understand without difficulty, the jargon of some of our modern authors, while he understood with as much pleasure as facility, this piece of *Melania*: the approbation of Fenelon, hath given the most honourable testimony to its merit. He has written with taste what Lewis the XIVth achieved by a noble love of glory.

will

will prefer to the passing applause of the pit, the deliberate approbation of an officer, as well instructed in this art, as in that of war; who having made the celebrated constable of Bourbon; and the more celebrated Chevalier Bayard speak so nobly, hath given a caution to our author, that he ought not to expose his piece over hastily on the theatre.

He wishes, without doubt, to be judged by the Painter of Francis I. so much the more, as this learned and profound historian knows better than any one, whether he may with propriety call king Charles V. *active*; and Henry de Transmare, *cruel*.

I wait the opinion of the two Academicians, philosophers, your worthy companions*, who have confounded with cowards and fools, accusers and informers, by an answer as energetic as it is wise and delicate, and who know to judge as well as they do to write.

Behold, Sir, the Areopagus of which you are the organ, and by which I would wish to be condemned, or absolved, if ever I ventured, in my turn, to write a tragedy, at a time when theatrical subjects seem to be exhausted. At a time when the public is disgusted with all these pleasures, which pass like their affections. At a time when the dramatic art is almost annihilated in France, after its vigorous career in the age of Lewis XIV. and when it seems to be totally sacrificed to a song, as it was in Italy after the age of Medecis.

I may speak of you almost as Horace did:

"Plotius et Varius, Mæcnas, Virgiliusque

"Valgius et probet hæc Octavius, optimus atque

"Fuscus, et hæc utinam viscorum laudet uterque, &c."

* N. B. There hath fallen into our hands, a short time ago, an answer of M. L'Abbé Arnaud, to I know not what pretended denunciation of I know not what pretended Theologian, before I know not what pretended Tribunal. This answer appears to me, much superior to all the polemical works of the oiber Arnaud.

Behold, if you please, how Horace places Virgil by the side of Mæcenas. The same sentiment warmed Ovid amidst the ice that covered the borders of the Euxine bridge, when in his last elegy "De Ponte," he attempted to make one of those miserable malignant creatures ashamed of himself, who insult those whom they believe to be unfortunate, and who are even cowardly enough to calumniate their fellow citizens on the point of stepping into the grave.

Why does Ovid in this elegy, call on the good writers of every species of the art? Because he consoles himself with the suffrage of Cotta, Messala, and Tuscus, Marius and Gracchus, Varus, and the others whose names he consecrates to immortality. Because it inspires good-will towards him in the breast of every honest man, and detestation of a retailer in detraction!

The first of the Italian poets, and perhaps of the whole world, Ariosto*, recounts in his forty-sixth canto, all the men of letters of his time, for whom he said he wrote, and not for the multitude. He named ten times more than I have in contemplation; and Italy did not furnish a list too long. He forgot not the illustrious ladies whose suffrage was so dear to him.

Boileau, that great master in the difficult art of French poetry. Boileau, less gallant than Ariosto, says in his beautiful epistle to his friend, the inimitable Racine:

" Et qu'importe à nos vers que Perrin les admire,
 " Que l'auteur de Jonas s'empresse pour les lire ?
 " Pourvu qu'ils sachent plaire au plus puissant de rois ?
 " Qu'a Chantilli Condé les lise quelquefois ;
 " Qu'Enguien en soit touché, que Colbert et Vivene,
 " Que la Rochefoucault, Marillac et Pomponé ;
 " Et cent autres qu'icé je ne puis faire entrer,
 " A leurs traits délicats se laissent pénétrer."

* He is hardly known in France, but by the very insipid translations we have in prose. He is the master of Tasso, and of Fontaine.

What does it boot, that Perrin loves our verse;
 And the weak Corra's eager to rehearse?—
 Since the most puissant king admires our rhimes,
 And Condé's self peruses them at times;
 Since Enguien's touch'd, since Colbert, and Vivone,
 Since Rochefoucault, Marillac and Pompone;
 And thousands more, whose names I need not tell,
 With fine wrought feelings, love our verses well.

I confess that I love better the "Mæcenas Virgili-
 " usque" in Horace, than the "le plus puissant de
 " Rois" in Boileau, because it is more beautiful, and,
 in my opinion, more becoming to place Virgil and the
 first minister of the empire in the same line, and shews
 more true taste than there is in preferring the suffrage
 of Lewis XIV. and the great Conde to that of the
 Corras and the Perrins, which produces no great effect.
 But in fine, Sir, you see that from Horace to Boileau,
 a great part of our good poets strove only to please men
 of refined ideas.

Since Boileau desired, with so much ardour, the ap-
 probation of the immortal Colbert, why shall we not
 labour to deserve that of a man who has begun his
 ministry better than he, who is much more intimate
 with the arts which we cultivate, and whose friendship
 has been so valuable to you, for a length of time, as
 indeed it is to all who have the honour of knowing it.
 Why should we not be ambitious of gaining the ap-
 probation of those who have rendered essential services
 to their country; be it by a necessary peace; be it
 by a glorious war; or by a merit less brilliant, but not
 less useful, as ambassadors, or in the necessary depart-
 ments of administration.

If the same Boileau laboured to please the Rochefou-
 caults of his age, are we to blame in wishing for the ap-
 probation of men, who do, at this day, as much honour
 to their country as did that name? at least if we are
 not altogether unworthy of occupying one moment of
 their leisure.

Is there a man of letters in France who would not
 think himself much honoured by the suffrages of two

of your compatriots, one of whom appears to have recalled the age of Medecis in culling the flowers of Parnassus, without quitting his seat in the Vatican; and the other in a line not less illustrious, is at all times the favourite of the Muses and the Graces, when he speaks in our assemblies, and when he speaks in his works? it is in this sense that Horace hath said,

Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est.

I say, in the same sentiment, to a man of a great name, the author of a very learned book on public felicity “my friend ought to be most happy if you do not disapprove of Don Pedro. It is yours to judge of kings and constables. I speak to you of it, as to a magistrate, associated in the Academy. You may be one day charged with the care of that public felicity.”

I shall yet add, that the divine Ariosto, did not confine himself to name only those of his own time, who had done honour to Italy, and for whom he wrote. He named the illustrious Julia de Gonzague, and the immortal wife of the Marquis de Pescara, and the princesses of the house of Est and of Melatesta, Borgia, Sforces, Trivulces; and, above all, the ladies celebrated alone by their genius, their taste, and their talents. It might be done in France, if we possessed an Ariosto. I would name to you more than one lady, whose suffrage ought to decide with you the merit of a piece, if I did not fear to expose their merit, and their modesty, to the sarcasms of certain gross pedants, who have neither the one, nor the other; or of some futile petitemaitres, who attempt to ridicule and turn all virtue into a joke.

If any detractor should say, that I have been lavish of my praise, on those whom I have taken as my judges, to render them favourable to me, I answer to the assertion, that I confirm the praise if my friend should be condemned. I demand for him a decision, and not a panegyric.

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The detractors may say, that my friend is not so young, but I will not shew them the extract of his baptism. They wish to discover his name, for it is a very great pleasure to satyryze people personally; but his name would neither render the piece better nor worse.

Yours is now most dear to us, Sir, as you have rendered it illustrious, and, after your friendship, your works are the greatest pleasure of my life. Be pleased to accept, or, at least, to pardon this Address.

A N

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE

O N

The TRAGEDY of DON PEDRO.

IT is, altogether, useless to declare, who is the young author of this new tragedy, while in the crowd of theatrical pieces, with which Europe is oppressed, it can only be praised by a very small number of dramatic amateurs, who may chance to run over a few pages of it. As soon as the dramatic art is brought to perfection, with a polished nation, they neglect it. They turn, with reason, to other studies; and Aristotle and Plato, succeed to Sophocles and Euripides. It is true, that philosophy ought to form the taste, but frequently it dulls its edge; and, if you except some universal geniuses, you will find that he, who is profoundly engaged in the pursuit of one art, is commonly insensible to all the rest.

If there are then any men of taste, who consent to throw away half an hour, in the perusal of a new tra-

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gedy;

gedy ; it behoves us to tell such, that it is not M. du Belloy, who presents it to them. The illustrious author of the Siege of Calais hath given to the theatre of Paris, a tragedy of *Pierre le Cruel*, but he has not published it. The author of Don Pedro, had, a long time ago, sketched some part of a plan for a tragedy on this subject. M. du Belloy, who saw it, had the condescension to write to him, that he would, on that account, desist from proceeding on his subject. From that moment the author of Don Pedro thought no more of his plan, and he had not resolved on treating the subject, on a new plan, till towards the end of 1774, when M. du Belloy seemed to persist in not publishing his work.

After this short eclaircissement, the sole end of which is to shew, what mutual regards subsist between men of true genius ; we proceed to give the historical, and critical discourse, such as we have it, from the hand of the author of Don Pedro.

Henry de Transamare, one of the many illegitimate sons of the king of Castille, named Alphonzo the eleventh, made war against his brother and his king, Don Pedro. It was no other than a revolt, he attempting thereby, with the support of his faction, to be declared the legitimate king of Castille. Guesclin, afterwards constable of France, assisted him in this enterprize.

The illustrious Guesclin was, at that time, precisely what is called in Italy and in Spain, a Condottiero.— He assembled a troop of banditti and robbers, with whom he suddenly re-instated pope Urban IV. in Avignon. He was entirely defeated at Navarette, by the king, Don Pedro, and by the great black Prince, sovereign of Guienne, whose name is immortal. It was the same prince who had taken king John, at Poitiers, and who took Guesclin at Navarette. Henry de Transamare fled into France, and in the mean time his party subsisted in Spain. Transamare, protected by France, had the credit to procure his brother, the king, to be excommunicated by the pope, who was again in the see
of

see of Avignon, and who, a little time after, leagued himself with Charles V. and the Bastard of Castille. The king Don Pedro was solemnly declared, *Bulgare et incredule*. These were the terms of the sentence, and what is even more strange, the pretext was, that the king kept mistresses.

These anathemas were then as common, as love intrigues were among the excommunicators and the excommunicated; and these amours produced the most cruel wars. The arms of the popes were more dangerous at that time, than they are now. The more artful princes disposed of these arms—and, as often as sovereigns were attacked, or did attack, they purchased their assistance at a great price.

The detestable education which was given at that time, to men of the highest rank, as well as to those of the lowest, and which was the custom for so long a time, made of men the most ferocious brutes, whose wild uncontrouled rage broke out in rebellion against all government. Princes created to themselves a sacred right of usurpation. A rescript, given in a town of Italy, in a language unknown to the multitude, transferred one kingdom in Spain, and another in Norway. Ravishers of states, and even more inhuman depredators, plunged into all crimes, were reputed saints, and were frequently called upon, on their death-beds, to invest themselves with the robe of a preaching brother, or with that of a minor brother.

Mr. Thomas, in his discourse to the Academy, says, "That the times of ignorance were always the times of ferocity." I love to repeat an expression so true—It is better to be the eccho, than the plagiary.

Transfamare returned into Spain, with a bull in one hand, and the sword in the other. He re-animated his party. The black Prince was dangerously ill at Bourdeaux, and could no more assist Don Pedro.

Guesclin was sent, a second time, into Spain, by king Charles V. who profited from the sad condition to which the black Prince was reduced. Guesclin took Don Pedro prisoner, in the battle of Montiel, between
Toledo

Toledo and Seville. It was immediately after this, that Henry de Transtamare, entering the tent of Guesclin, and seeing the king, his brother, unarmed, exclaimed, "Where is this young son of a w——, who calls himself the king of Castille," and instantly stabbed him with his poignard.

The assassin, who had no other right to the crown, than that he was himself the young bastard, a name which he dared to give to the legitimate king, was immediately acknowledged king of Castille, and his heirs have always reigned in Spain either by the male or female line.

It cannot astonish us, after this, that the historians have always taken the part of the conquerors, against the conquered. Those who have been the historians of Spain and France, have not been Tacituses; Mr. Horace Walpole, the envoy of England to Spain, had good reason for saying in his doubts on Richard III, as we have said of others, "That when a successful king accuses his enemies, all the historians are eager to give evidence in his favour." Such is the weakness of most men of letters, not that they are more servile and base than the courtiers of a criminal, and a successful king, but their servility is more durable.

If any old courtier of Charlemaigne, had read at any time, a manuscript of Fredegair, or at least of St. Gall, he might have exclaimed—Oh, the liar! but yet he would have continued to employ him. He did not propagate delusion and absurdity the less.—The author was quoted in the following ages; he became an authority; and Don Ruinart adduces his testimony in his faithful chronicles. It is thus that all the legends, of the last age, are filled with the most ridiculous fables, and ancient history assuredly is not exempt from them.

Those who in this manner, attempt to deceive mankind, are constantly excited to it, in part, by the folly of national prejudice. There is hardly an historian of England, who hath lost any opportunity that offered to him, of satyrizing the French, and that with a mixture

ture of vulgarity. Véli and Villaret slander the English as much as they possibly can, and Mezeray does not spare the Spanish. A Titus-Livius could not know this partiality, since he lived at a time when his nation occupied alone the known world; *Romanos rerum dominos*; all other nations were at their feet. But at this time when Europe is parcelled out into so many dominions, that balance one against another; at this time when every nation hath so many great men in every department of science: whoever attempts to flatter his own country, runs the risque of displeasing the others; if, by chance, he is praised for his labour, and he certainly ought to labour, in some degree, to deserve the acknowledgements of his own country. Truth was never esteemed, so much, as in the present period, and it only remains for us to discover it.

In the quarrels which have so often arisen among the powers of Europe, it is truly difficult to discover of which side, right is; and when it is discovered, it is dangerous to declare it. The review, which in the close of an age, ought to have destroyed the false conjectures with which its current history was disfigured, hath frequently substituted new errors in the room of the old. They have done so much that all is become problematic, from the time of the Salique law, to the system of Lais; and after sifting to the utmost of our power, we discover no more than that we exist.

We do not even know the period of the creation of the seven electors in Germany; of the parliament in England; and the peerage in France. There is hardly one sovereign house of which we can fix the origin. It is in history that chaos is the commencement of all. Who can investigate the source of our usages, and of our popular opinions?

Why do they give the surname of "John the good" to that king John, who begun his reign by ordering his high constable to be killed in his presence, without even the form of a trial?—Who assassinated four principal chevaliers in Rouen; who was conquered on account

count of his negligence; who ceded one moiety of France, and who ruined the other?

Why do they give to Don Pedro, the legitimate king of Castille, the name of *cruel*; and yet fail to give it to the Bastard, Henry de Transtamare, the assassin and the usurper of Don Pedro?

Why do they give the miserable Charles VI. the appellation of "Well-beloved," who disinherited his son, in favour of a stranger, the enemy and the oppressor of the nation, and who plunged the state into a subjection the most horrible that the records of history have shewn? All these surnames, or rather nicknames, which historians repeat, without adding to them the sense, do they not come from the same cause, that makes a churchwarden, who cannot read, repeat the names "Albert le Grand," of "Gregoire Thaumaturge," and of "Julien l'Apostat," without knowing what these names mean? What town was ever called the Saint, or the Superb, in which there was neither sanctity nor grandeur? What ship was ever called the Thunderer, or the Invincible, that was taken in quitting the port?

History then having, but too frequently, been the recital of fables and conjectures; when an author undertakes a tragedy drawn from history, what is he to do, but choose the fable or the conjecture most agreeable to his fancy. One author, in his piece, might possibly regard Scevola, as the respectable revenger of public liberty, and who punished the one hand, because he had, unhappily destroyed the other, by being the fatal enemy of Rome. Another might probably represent Scevola as a villainous spy—a fanatical assassin—a Poltrot—a Baltazar Gerard. So perhaps a Spaniard would call Francis I. a courageous, but an imprudent commander—a bad politician, and a man who flew from his engagements of honour. A professor of the college would raise him to the heavens for having protected and patronised the letters. A German Lutheran would plunge him to the lower regions for having ordered the Lutherans to be burnt in Paris, while he employed them as soldiers in the empire: and if the Ex-

Jesuits

Jesuits were to make a tragedy on the subject, they would not fail to say with Daniel, "that he would have ordered the dauphin to be burnt, if the Dauphin had not believed in indulgencies; so much this great king possessed of piety."

We have a Spanish tragi-comedy, where Peter, whom we call *cruel*, is called the *just*; a title constantly bestowed on him by Philip II. I knew a young man who had written a tragedy of Adonias and Solomon, where he represented Solomon as the most barbarous, and the most cowardly of all parricides. "Know ye not," said his friends to him, "that God, in a dream, inspired him with wisdom." "That may be," said he, "but he did not add humanity to it when he awaked."

There are harangues in the college, under the names of historical, dramatical, and so forth; in which the nation, that is celebrated, is always the first in the world. Her soldiers, though poorly paid, are the greatest heroes in the world, although they may have run away; the capital composed perhaps throughout of wooden houses, is the most superb city on earth. The arm-chair, studded with gilt nails, in which a king Goth or Alain sat, the finest throne in the world. And the author who believes himself, all this while, the greatest in nature, may be perhaps the most stupid in it, unless indeed he happens to find among men, some even more stupid, who will pen you, for twenty sous, an argumentative critique on a new piece—a critique, that will go, the next day, with the piece, into eternal oblivion.

They also exalt, at times, to Heaven, the ancient chevaliers, defenders or oppressors of women and of churches, superstitious and debauched, sometimes thieves and sometimes spendthrifts, and who fight one against the other for the honour of princesses, who have lost their honour. So that, it appears to me, all that an author can improve upon, when he amuses himself with the drama is, to speak in the language of Horace,

*Seditione, dolis, scelere, atque libidine, et ira,
Illicacos intra muros peccatus et extra.*

F R A G M E N T

O F A N

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE

O N

D O N P E D R O.

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THE reasoners, who are, like me, without genius, and who give us dissertations on the age of genius, frequently repeat this antithesis of la Bruyere—"That Racine hath painted men, such as they are, and Corneille, such as they ought to be."—They repeat an insignificant falsehood; for, never did either Bajazet, Xiphares, Britannicus, or Hippolitus make love so gallantly as they do in Racine. And never ought Cæsar to have said, as he is made to say, in the Pompey of Corneille, to Cleopatra, "that he would not have fought at Pharsalia but to merit her affections." He ought not to have said, that his glorious title of "the first in the world" was now effectually ennobled by that of "captive" to the little Cleopatra, aged fifteen years, and which he sent to her in a packet of linen. Neither Cinna nor Maximus ought to have been such as Corneille hath painted them. Cinna ought not to have possessed any right of assassinating Augustus to please his deceased daughter. Maximus ought to have had no right to be enamoured of this daughter, and to betray the confidence of Augustus, Cinna and his mistress. This is not the same Maximus to whom Ovid wrote,

wrote, and who was worthy of his name "Maxime
 " *qui tanti mensuram nominis implet.*" The right of
 Cæsar in *Polyeuctes*, was not to be that of a barbarous
 coward, who ordered his son-in-law to be beheaded, "to
 " acquire by that means, the more powerful support,
 " and to raise himself an hundred times higher than he
 " would otherways have been."

There hath been much, and indeed too much writ-
 ten, after Aristotle, upon tragedy. The two great rules
 of which are, to render the characters interesting, and
 the poetry harmonious. I mean a harmony proper for
 the subject. To write in verse, and make bad verse, is
 the highest of all human follies.

Twenty times hath the following pretended expression
 of Peter Corneille struck my ear. "My piece is fi-
 " nished; I have nothing more to do than to make the
 " verse." This was the usual expression of Menander
 more than two thousand years before Corneille, if we
 may credit Plutarch in his question, "Whether the
 " Athenians excelled most in arms or in letters?"
 Menander might with great truth have said so, because
 the versification of comedy is not the most difficult.
 But in the art of tragedy the difficulty is almost insur-
 mountable, at least with us.

In the last age, there was only Racine who wrote
 tragedy with any continued purity and elegance, and
 the charm of this elegance is so powerful, that the men
 of letters and taste have overlooked the sameness that
 appears in his declarations of love, and the weakness
 of some characters in favour of his enchanting lan-
 guage.

I see in the illustrious writer who preceded him, many
 sublime scenes, of which neither Lopez de Vega, nor Cal-
 deron, nor Shakespeare have conceived the least idea,
 and which are infinitely superior to all that we admire in
 Sophocles and Euripides; but at the same time I see a
 heap of barbarisms and absurdities that shock—cold,
 subtle, and obscene chains of reasoning that freeze me—
 I see besides twenty entire pieces, in which there is
 hardly

hardly one passage that demands favour for the rest. The incontestible evidence of this truth, for example, may be found in the two *Berenices* of Racine and Corneille. The plan of these two pieces is equally bad, equally unworthy of the tragic theatre; the same fault pervades them both, even to ridicule. But for what reason is it impossible for us to read the *Berenice* of Corneille? For what reason is it inferior to the pieces of Pradon, Riouperous, Danchet, Pechantré and Pellegrin? and how comes it that that of Racine is read with so much pleasure, even by the tasteless? How comes it, that it forces tears from us?—It is because the composition is fine. This word comprehends all; sentiment, truth, decency, nature, purity of diction, grandeur, strength, harmony, elegance, profound ideas, fine ideas, and above all clear ideas, affecting images, and terrible images. Deny this merit to the divine tragedy of *Athalie*, and there remains nothing to it. Deny this merit to the fourth book of the *Enéid*; to the speech of Priam, to Achilles in Homer, and they are insipid. The Abbé du Bois had very good reason for saying that poetry never charms but by good detail.

If so many amateurs knew by heart the admirable passages of the Horaces, of Cinna, Pompey, Polycutes, and four verses of Heraclius, it is that these verses are so excellent. And if they cannot read either Theodore, Pertharites, Don Sancho of Aragon, Attila, Agesilaus, Pulcheria, the Golden Fleece, or Surena, &c. &c. &c. it is that almost all the composition is detestable. He must be of a very bad complexion who would labour to excuse these against his conscience. Sometimes, indeed, there have been a few miserable writers who have dared to write panegyrics on this crowd of pieces, as flat as they are barbarous, because they conceive that, as their own pieces are written in the same stile, they demand favour at their hands.

A N S W E R
TO MONS. DE VILL.

TO think, as well as write, my friend aspires—

The Graces have with Reason join'd;

To thee their empire they've resign'd;

While superstition at thy feet expires.

So did Apollo, god of Day!

Charm Olympus with his song;

While his feather'd darts he flung;

And Python crush'd, before him lay.

He's a god, when by courage alone,

The Monster detested he slays;

He's a god, when ascending his throne,

His face, uneclipsed, he displays.

But Man, to more advantage, sees

The God between his Isth's knees.

T O T H E S A M E .

Ferney, 11th December, 1765.

IOPEN your casket, Monsieur, where I see—what?

—myself in person, painted by a fine hand.

I remember very well, that

This Damsel, as jocund as day,

Flew from frolic far away,

Within my cottage, to design
 This wrinkled, laughing face of mine :
 In truth it was the god of love,
 The festive moment to improve,
 A satyr painting, by his pow'r,
 With all the softness of la Tour.

It is true, that in the engraving they have made me
 shew my teeth rather tremendously—I am led to sus-
 pect from this that I have done so—I shall at least
 preserve one fang for you then, as you have been so
 very long without writing to me.

Berenice says to Titus,

“ Voyez-mei plus souvent, et ne me donner rien.”

See me oftener and give me nothing.

I can say to you,

“ Ecrivez-moi souvent, et ne me peignez point.”

Write to me often, and do not paint me.

But if I am flattered by your gallantry, I cannot bring
 myself to be pleased with the print—I thank the painter,
 and I forgive the engraver.

They affirm that you have engaged yourself in several
 disputes. What mortal is not now and then at war ?
 —What mortal can have greater reason for it than
 yourself ?

Dii tibi formam

Dii tibi divitias dederunt, artemque fruendi.

Add to this, above all, good health, and have the
 goodness to write me the news when you have nothing
 else to do. Absence does not prevent me from interest-
 ing myself in your welfare and pleasures. If you are
 in a whirlwind of business, forget me ; but if you are

not

not so, you ought at times, Monsieur, to remember one of the truest friends you possess—you have said it in your verses, and I will never give you the lie.

A N S W E R
TO ST. BERGIER,

Who had printed some useless letters of the author's.

I WAS affected, Monsieur, with your letter of the 12th of Feb. They tell me you are devout, when at the same time I see in you, sensibility and honesty. You give me to understand that you were cut for the stone a dozen years ago. I congratulate you on your preservation, if you find life agreeable. I have always been hurt, that, in this best of possible worlds, there should be stones in our bladders, when, at the same time, our bladders are no more fit for stone carriers, than they are for lanthorns; but I always submit myself to providence. I have never been cut—I have had, and I have my full dose of evil in other coin: every one has his own, and we must learn to suffer and die in all fashions.

You acquaint me that they have printed, I know not what, letters that I wrote you more than thirty years ago; you tell me they are fallen into the hands of one named Vaugé, who cannot answer for them because he is dead. If those letters are his only estate, I advise his heirs to renounce the succession. I have read this collection: I am jaded indeed, but I have still enough of memory left, in my seventy-second year, to assure you that there is not one of those letters that is not false. I defy all the Vaugé's dead and living, and all the editors of rhapsodies together, to shew one page

of mine, that has the most distant resemblance to what they have had the folly to publish.

It is now about fifty years, that they have been in possession of my name, to serve themselves by. I am indifferent about the matter, as it gains somewhat to the poor devils: the poorest devil must live; but he ought, at least, to consult me, on the occasion that he might gain his money more honestly.

You tell me that the author of the "Année Littéraire" hath made use of these letters: you do not tell me what use, but if it is what they generally make of these pamphlets, all that I can say to you in answer is, that I never read the "Année Littéraire," and that I am therefore a very proper person to be used as they please.

You fear that the publication of these scraps may make me die with chagrin. Be assured, I am not at all abandoned in my decrepid old age; I have in my house a Jesuit, who gives me lessons of patience; for though I hate the Jesuits when they are strong and insolent, I love them when they are humble: I see none but happy people, and that makes me so; my tenants are all at their ease, and see no Tipstaffs with warrants of attachment. I have built, as well as M. de Pompidan, a handsome church, where I pray to God for his conversion, and for that of Catherine Fréron: I pray him also to inspire you with discretion, to prevent any other false copies being taken of letters that I have wrote you. Bear yourself well—I am old, and you are not young.—I pardon, with all my heart, your weakness.—I have forgiven others even to ingratitude. It is only overbearing wickedness and hypocrisy that at times stirs my bile: at present, nothing gives me pain, but the bad verses which they send me, now and then, from Paris.

L E T.

L E T T E R

T O T H E

AUTHORS OF THE GAZETTE LITTERAIRE.

YOU have said, Messieurs, in giving an account of the work of Mr. Hooke, "That the Roman History is yet to write among us," and nothing is more true. It was pardonable in the Roman historians, to illustrate the early periods of the republic, by fables that need only to be transcribed to be refuted. All that is distant from probability, ought at least to be doubted, but the impossible ought not to be written.

We begin our history with saying, that Romulus having assembled three thousand three hundred banditti, built the town of Rome, a thousand paces square; but a thousand paces square hardly sufficed for two farms: how then could three thousand three hundred men be contained in this town?

Who were the pretended kings of this mob of vagabonds? Were they not apparently the leaders of the thieves, who partook of a tumultuous government, a little, savage, and indisciplined Horde?

Ought we not when we compile ancient history, to shew the enormous difference, that there is between the captains of these bandits, and the true kings of a powerful nation?

It is asserted, and acknowledged by the Roman writers, that, during the first four hundred years, the state was not more than ten leagues in length, and ten in breadth. The state of Genoa is much more considerable at this day, than the Roman republic was then.

It was not till the year 360, that Veii was taken, after a kind of a siege, or a blockade, that lasted ten years. Veii was almost in the same place, that Civira-

Vecchia is at this day, about five or six leagues from Rome. And the ground in the vicinity of Rome, the capital of Europe, hath always been so barren, that the people wished to quit their country to go and settle at Veii.

None of their wars, up to that with Pyrrhus, deserved a place in history, if they had not been a prelude to their great conquests. All the events, to the time of Pyrrhus, are, for the most part, so little and obscure, that they are put to the necessity of embellishing them, by incredible prodigies, or by actions destitute of all probability; from the adventure of the she-wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus; and from that of Lucrece, Clelia, and Curtius, up to the pretended letter of the physician of Pyrrhus, who proffered, say they, to the Romans to poison his master, for a recompense proportionable to the service. What recompense could the Romans give to him, who had not then either gold or silver? And how could they suspect a Greek physician to be weak enough to write such a letter?

All our compilers collect these tales without the smallest inquiry: all are copyists; not one is a philosopher. We see them all honour the name of those virtuous men, who in truth, were no other than courageous robbers. They tell us, that the virtue of Rome was at last corrupted by riches and luxury; as if it were a virtue to have pillaged nations, and, as if the only vice they could be guilty of, was in squandering what they stole. If one wished to make a moral treatise, instead of a history, of their rise, he ought to inspire more horror for the depredations of the Romans, than for the use which they made of their treasures, ravished from so many nations which they despoiled one after another.

Our modern historians of these remote times, ought to discern, at least, the times of which they speak. They ought not to treat the improbable combat of the Horatii, and the Curiatii; the romantic adventure of Lucrece; that of Clelia, or that of Curtius, as they do the battles of Pharsalia and Actium. It is essential to distinguish

distinguish the age of Cicero, from those in which the Romans could neither read, nor write, nor compute the years, but by nails drove into the capitol. In a word, all the Roman historians, which we have in the modern languages, do not at all satisfy their readers.

No person hath yet successfully discovered, that they were a people scrupulously attached to superstitions; who knew not how to regulate the appointed times of their feasts; who knew not, during the space of five hundred years, the use of a sun-dial: a people whose Senate piqued themselves, at times, on their humanity, but whose self-same Senate sacrificed, to their gods, two Greeks, and two Gauls, to expiate the gallantry of one of their vestals.—A people always exposed to wounds, and yet who had not, for five ages, but one physician; who was, in truth, both a chirurgion, and an apothecary.

The only art of this people for six hundred years, was that of war; and as they were always armed, they conquered, one by one, the nations who were not continually under arms.

The author of the little volume "*Sur la grandeur et sur la decadence des Romains*;" On the grandeur and the decline of the Romans; has told us more than all the enormous works of the modern historians put together. He would have been alone worthy to have made this history, if he had resisted a little more, the spirit of system, and the desire of giving us, frequently, ingenious thoughts for reasoning.

One of the faults that renders the perusal of modern histories of Rome still less supportable, is, that the authors enter into the same long-winded detail as Titus-Livius did. They do not reflect that Titus-Livius wrote to a nation, to whom these details were precious. It is truly ridiculous in men to imagine, that the French interest themselves in the marches and counter-marches of a Consul, who made war with the Samnites and the Volscians, as we interest ourselves in the battle of Ivry, or in the passage of the navigable Rhine.

All ancient history ought to be written differently from ours; and it is for this account that authors of ancient history are wanted. They repeat, and they dwell upon harrangues that were never pronounced, more intent to make a display of eloquence misplaced, than to discuss the most useful truths. Their exaggerations often puerile, their false valuations of the monies of antiquity, and the riches of states, draw into error the ignorant, and are painful to men of understanding. They write in our days, that Archimedes hurled darts from a bow placed at a considerable distance from where he stood; that he erected a galley in the midst of the water, which he rowed with the tip of his finger; that it cost six hundred thousand crowns for cleaning the common sewers of Rome, &c.

The more ancient histories are written with still less attention, sound criticism is even more neglected; the marvellous, the incredible predominate. They seem as if they were written for children more than for men. The enlightened age in which we live requires in authors a maturer judgment.

T O T H E S A M E.

December, 1764.

I SEE, Messieurs, by one of your last Gazettes, that the government of Sweden hath for more than twenty years persevered in the useful purpose of ascertaining the exact force of the country, and that they have begun by an actual enumeration of the inhabitants. It is said that they have found, in the extent of Sweden, without including Pomerania, two millions three hundred and eighty-three thousand inhabitants. This calculation astonishes—Sweden with Finland is twice as large in extent as France, which is said to contain about twenty millions of people; and it was proved to
be

be so by the returns of all the intendants of the kingdom in 1698, when they found very near this number, and when Lorrain was not as yet joined to France. How can a country, which is but the moiety of another in extent, yet contain ten times the number of citizens?

To an equal territory it must require that France should be ten times better than Sweden; and the territory being only the moiety, it follows that France should be twenty times better.

Let us consider, however, that we ought to cut off from the map of Sweden, the Baltic sea, the gulph of Finland, and the gulph of Bothnia, which take up near the half of what constitutes Sweden. Let us omit also Lapmarck and Laponia, which we ought to account as nothing—Let us cut off also the immense lakes, and we shall find, that the inhabited territory of France will be one third greater than the inhabited extent of Sweden.

But this inhabited country being at least ten times more fertile, it is not astonishing that it should possess ten times the number of citizens.

That which appears to me deserving of our attention, is, that in Gothland, a province the most southerly, and fertile in Sweden, there are one thousand two hundred and forty-eight inhabitants to every square league of Sweden; but the square league of Sweden, ten and a half to a degree, is to the square league of France, twenty-five to a degree, as four and two thirds almost is to one.

It appears by the enumeration of France, made by the intendants of the kingdom in the year 1698, that there are six hundred and thirty-six persons to every square league of France.

But if the square league of France, which is to the square league of Sweden as 1 is to $4\frac{1}{2}$, has six hundred and thirty-six inhabitants, and the Swedish square league has twelve hundred and forty-eight, it is clear, that the square league of Gothland, which ought to have four times and two thirds more of planters, maintains scarce double the number. Therefore the same space

of

of country in France, hath a moiety of planters or inhabitants, more than the same space has in Gothland.

Could this prodigious superiority of one country over another, in any time, be reduced to an equality? Yes, if the inhabitants of the ungracious climate, could discover the secret of changing the nature of their sun, and of approaching nearer to the tropic.

Could the inhabitants of a country be doubled or tripled?—Yes, if they could produce twice or three times as many children; but how could they be supported, if the earth did not at the same time render in a twofold or a threefold proportion.

For want of a threefold produce to maintain thrice the number of inhabitants, they must have recourse to commerce, by the benefits of which, they may be enabled to acquire two or three times more provisions than are necessary to the consumption of one day.—But how is this advantageous commerce to be obtained, if nature denies every production that can be exported?

The commissioners established for giving an account to the States assembled, of the population of Sweden, affirm in their memoir, on the evidence of history, that the country had, three hundred years ago, almost three times the number of inhabitants that it has at this day. It is the interest of all men to know the proofs of this strange assertion.—Can it be true that Sweden, without commerce, without industry, and much worse cultivated than at present, could yet maintain three times the number of inhabitants?

It appears that the Northern countries never increased in population, because nature hath been always the same.

Cæsar in his commentaries, says, That the Helvetians deserted their country to go and establish themselves towards Saintonge; there departed in the whole, to the number of three hundred and sixty-eight thousand persons. I do not believe that Helvetia has more inhabitants at this day, and if she should recall all her citizens that are now settled in foreign countries, I doubt whether she could maintain them.

Much

Much is spoken about the increase of population in a series of years. It is my opinion, that our greatest policy is, that men who do live, should be as happy as human nature and the extreme disproportions in the several situations of life will permit; but if we cannot procure this blessing to man, why do we so eagerly desire to multiply the species?—Is it to make more wretches?—The greater part of fathers are afraid of having more infants, and all States desire the increase of their people. If every kingdom acquires a proportionable number of new subjects, not one can acquire a superiority by that means.

When a country hath an overflow of citizens, that overflow is usefully employed in the colonies of America. It is a misfortune to nations who are obliged to send thither the inhabitants that are necessary to the state; it is to unfurnish the paternal house to build a strange one. But the Spanish have begun, and have rendered this misfortune indispensable to other nations.

Germany is a nursery of men, and hath no colonies; what is the consequence?—That the Germans who are on the borders, people the neighbouring countries. It is thus that Prussia and Pomerania have repaired their scarcity of men.

Very few countries are in the situation of the Germans. Spain and Portugal, for example, are not well peopled; the women are not fruitful; the men are not laborious, and the whole of the country is dry.

Africa furnishes, every year, about forty thousand negroes to America, and does not seem to be exhausted. It appears, that Nature has favoured the blacks with a fruitfulness which she has denied to most other nations. The country the most peopled upon earth is China, without having any of those books, and rules for favouring population of which we are incessantly speaking. Nature performs all her operations without having respect for our reasoning.

FRAGMENT OF AN ENTERTAINMENT

GIVEN AT

COURT-DIMANCHE, near FONTAINBLEAU,

On the Marriage of the Marquis de Montconseil and
Madamoiselle de Curzai.—The Curate being drunk,
they persuaded him that he was going to die, and
recited to him the following exhortation, after which
they chaunted to him a variety of couplets, and
danced round him.—It was in 1724.

OF Court-Dimanche curate, and priest of Apollo,—
Whom thus I see stretch'd at thy length, in the hollow:
After seeing thee for twenty long years holding forth;
Interring, confessing, baptizing the earth;
After so many songs from thy musical tongue;
And requiems in hundreds for us that you've sung:—
We own, that thy state with much anguish we view,
As we meet here, to-day, to put pray'rs up for you,
But all pass, and all die, both the weak and the brave;
And the infant of birth is a step to the grave:
Little Andrew the father's reduced to a cinder.
Brother Fredon, Diogenes, great Alexander,
Cæsar, la Fillon, Constantine, Mai,
Abraham, and Brioche, all pass away.
This coachman so famous at court, and at ville;
The lover of wits, and the sire of vaudville;
Of whom you the Almoner, lately, have been
In this quarter as well as at Eustace was seen.
You strait must go with him; then 'ere you depart,
You must think of your end, and examine your heart;
If still you have walk'd in the thorny, strait way,
A simple, good Curate—I've nothing to say.

But

But between you and I, what life is well spent;
What Curate on earth does not need to repent?

How oft, when the youth you have led to confess;
(At the time when their errors their bosoms oppress)
In the sacred tribunal, by piety made,
Their mortal transgressions by you to be laid;
How oft have you wish'd for the beauty they loved,
And committed the sin that you daily reproved?
How oft have you led to the vestry, with glee,
The sweet, half-repentant, and kind devotee;
On a pew to recline—to disgrace the abode,
That was built for the service, and worship of God?
I hope that thy flesh, tho' a powerful sad devil,
Hath not won thee, by art, to be guilty of evil?
That, worthy to copy the primitive saints,
No desire you indulge, that your bosom torments.
An eunuch you live, and your virtue it proves;
But, Curate, God tempts, and tries whom he loves.

Have you known all the bliss that your feelings impart;
The meltings, the throbs, and the pangs of the heart?
That Charity owns, and for which we all live;
To the vile, and the wicked, that shuns not to give?
The first of all virtues. In vain you aspire
To a Prelate's soft manners—a Capuchin's fire;
To the timid cold life of a weak Cordelier;
To be learned, and chaste as a Carmelite Friar;
To be humble and contrite, as Loyola's race,
All these, without charity, are but disgrace.

Begin then, good Curate—repentance pursue;
Throw off the old man, and take up the new;
Succintly to us be confess'd or refused
The hundred small vices of which you're accused;
Your prospects, your pastimes, your pleasures, and pains;
Your many intrigues—your affections, disdains;
What number of hog'sheads you drink in a year;
How often Brunette comes to sleep with you here:

Before,

Before, by vile death, from this world you're caught,
 Confess all the evils, with which you are fraught;
 Before you depart to your heaven, or hell,
 You must make up your mind, and settle your will,
 Poor Bellebar will lose all his pleasure and fame,
 For his manners and songs from thy genius all came:
 For his comfort at least then you ought, by your deed,
 To chuse out a Curate, that's fit to succeed:
 He shall have thy employ, and his head you'll inspire,
 With thy learning, and grace, with thy spirit and fire.
 As Elias of old, when, aloft from men's eyes,
 In a chariot of light, he soar'd to the skies;
 Before his departure (the pious good sage!)
 Elifha consoled, who had served as his page;
 And, in a testament, that never was writ,
 With an old tatter'd cloak, bequeath'd him his sp'rit.

E X T R A C T

FROM A NEW WORK, INTITLED

DES DICTIONNAIRES DE CALOMNIES.

ARTICLE 15.

A NEW poison was invented, after a term of years, in the degeneracy of literature. This was the art of outraging the living and the dead in alphabetical order. No one has yet spoken of these collections of injuries. If we are not mistaken, they begun when Monsieur Lavocat, librarian of Sorbonne, one of the wisest and most temperate, as he was one of the most learned writers of the age, had published his historical Dictionary towards the year 1740. A Jansenist (for, to the misfortune of France, it had then both Jansenists and Molinists) produced a defamatory libel on Monsieur l'Abbé Lavocat, under the title and in the form of a dictionary.

He

He begins with thanking God that he has finished this great work, under the eye and with the assistance of the concealed author of the "Gazette Ecclesiastique,—whose pen," says he, "is an arrow, like to the arrow of Jonathan, the son of Saul, which returneth not back, and which is always stained with the blood and the fat of the strong." The Abbé Lavocat answered him, that he saw very little resemblance between the arrow of Jonathan, stained with fat, and the pen of a Norman priest, who sold Gazettes. He added, that to render himself useful, he ought to be pierced with some arrow or another in his convulsion fits. The libel of the Jansenist attacked all the men of letters who were not of that party. The arrow was darted at the Fontenelles, the Mottes, the Saurins, and those who were of no party.

We have placed, before the age of Lewis XIV. a correct list of all the artists that did honour to France in that time. Two or three persons associated themselves some time afterwards, to make a like catalogue of the artists of the three last ages; but these authors have acted differently from the other. They have insulted, in the order of the alphabet, all whose reputations they believed it to be their interest to attack. We know not whether their arrow has returned again or not, or whether it is dyed with the blood of the strong. He who wrote the bitterest and the worst was an Abbé Sabatier, a native of a village near to Castres, and a man different from all the gentlemen of merit who bear the same name.

He was paid for abusing, above all, those who do honour to literature at this time by their erudition and talents. In the crowd of those whom he attacks, we find Mons^r Helvetius.—He qualifies him and his friends with the appellation of madmen.—"We can assure our readers," says he, "from the justest observations that his philosophical illusions were the effect of a kind of involuntary madness. He pleased himself by groaning on the bosom of friendship in all the extra-
"vagance

“vagance and excess of the Maniacks, who gloried to have him for a brother.”

The Abbé Sabatier had reason to say, that he had been led to make just observations on Helvetius, since he had been relieved by him, from extreme misery, and who, revived in his house (as Tartuffe was in that of Orgon) preserved his existence thro’ his liberality. The first thing that he did after the death of Helvetius, was to mangle the corps of his benefactor.

We do not agree in opinion with Helvetius, on most questions of metaphysics and morality, and we are very ready to declare our disagreement, without hurting the esteem and the friendship that we have for him. But that a man nourished by his charity, should take the mask of devotion to outrage, with fury, both him, his friends and all those even who gave him assistance, we think that there is nothing to be found more cowardly in the three ages of which this Monsieur speaks, and of which he knows so little.

He!—the Abbé Sabatier!—to dare to feign himself the defender of religion!—to dare to treat as impious, the men, of all the world, the most virtuous!—If he knew that we have in our possession his abridgment of Spinosism, intitled, “Analyse de Spinoza,” published at Amsterdam: a work full of sarcasms and irony, written altogether with his own hand, and concluding with these words, “without religion, I shall make the honestest man.—The law makes slaves of us—and arrests the hand.” In fine signed “Adieu, Baptisabit.”

If he knew that we possess, also written with his hand, the infamous verses that he wrote in the prison at Strasbourg, and other verses as licentious as they are bad, what would he say? would he not sink into himself? Oh, no—he would go and demand a benefice, and he would obtain it perhaps.

The heart the most base, and capable of all a coward’s crimes, is that, of an hypocritical atheist. We

We have been ever persuaded that atheism can produce no good, and that it can give rise to the greatest of evils. We have all along perceived the infinite distance that there is between the men of genius, who have written against superstition, and the fools who have written against God. There is not in all the systems of atheism, either philosophy, or morality.

We cannot perceive in it any philosophy. For, is there any reason in saying that having discovered the mechanism of a sphere of Archimedes, of Possidonius, or of one of the orreries which are sold in England; we ought not to look for the model in the fabrication of the universe. To admire the copy, and be blind to the intelligence contained in the original? Is this more foolish than it would be to say—The prints of Raphael are made by intelligent artists, but the drawing is quite unconnected.

Atheism is not less contrary to morality than it is to the interest of mankind; for if you acknowledge not a god, what check have you against secret crimes?

Duræ saltem virtutis amator,

Quære quid est virtus, et posce exemplar honesti.

We do not say that in adoring a supreme being, just and good, we ought to admit the boat of Charon, Cerberus, the Eumenides, or the angel of the deceased Samuel, who came to demand of God the soul of Moses, and who went with Michael to where he was—We do not pretend that Hercules could bring back Alcestes from the infernal regions, or that the Portuguese Xavier was recovered from death nine times.

Just as we are carefully to distinguish between the fable and the history, ought we to discern between reason and chimera.

It is very certain that the belief of a just God must be useful.—What man is there, who having a colony of six hundred persons to govern, would wish it to be composed of atheists?

VOL. I. *Miscellanies.* I What

What man is there who would not rather have to act with a Marcus Aurelius, or with an Epictetus, than with an Abbé Sabatier?—We knew, and we have often asserted, that there are atheists by principle, whose opinions do not corrupt their hearts.

Atheists we have often seen;

Virtuous in spite of spleen;

Whose thoughts, too bad to be express,

Yet did not hurt, nor wound the breast.

Such was Spinoza, the unwise—

The God, whom he so loud defies,

Pities his weakness, gives him aid,

And covers him in Virtue's shade.

We speak to all those reasoning atheists, who admit of no bridle to their appetites, and who yet act with honour; who reason badly, and who govern themselves well: Sirs, protect yourselves against the Abbé Sabatier, who practises just as he professes.—Therefore observe him not—He is equally the detestation of religion and philosophy.

When the “*Système de la Nature*” made so much noise, we did not dissemble our opinions of the book—It appeared to us a declamation, at times eloquent but tedious, contrary to sound reason, and pernicious to society. Spinoza at least had embraced the opinion of the Stoics who acknowledge a supreme intelligence, but in the “*Système de la Nature*,” it is pretended that matter produces the intelligence itself. If it only dealt in absurdity we could be silent; but this idea is pernicious, because, there are among men, who not believing in honour and humanity more than in God, make their gods to their liking, and plunge into every crime that they think they can commit unpunished. The atheistical Tartuffes are yet more to be feared. A brave deist, or a follower of the great Lama, a little courageous, may have the consolation to kill a bloody atheist, if he should demand his money, with a pistol in his hand;

hand; but how can he defend himself against a hypocritical and a calumniating atheist, who passes his time in the antichamber of a bishop? &c.

L E T T E R

TO MR. ROSSET, ACCOMPTANT,
AUTHOR of a POEM upon AGRICULTURE, dedicated
to the KING.

YOU will pardon me, on account of my great age, and continual infirmities, that I have not, before now, thanked you for the valuable present with which you have honoured me.

I have read with great attention, your Poem upon Agriculture.—I find in it the useful, the agreeable, the necessary variety, and the difficult almost always happily overcome.

They say that you have not studied the art which you paint.—I have cultivated the science more than twenty years, and yet assuredly I will not attempt to paint it after you.

I was surprized when I found in your first canto, that you adopted the method of Mr. Tull, of England, to sow in beds. Many of our French (whom you constantly call “François,” and consequently can never make use of the word at the end of a verse) will give credit to the invention, and I can assure you that it is detestable; at least it is so in the climate where I live. A gentleman who has been a long time praised in our journals, and who was a farmer by book, ruined himself by sowing in beds, and was obliged to borrow so much, that his name at last adorned the Gazette.

I have grubbed up the grounds that were most barren, and which could produce no other but some com-

mon herbs, but I have not advised any one to imitate my example, except indeed those who are rich enough to maintain such immense charges, and to wait twenty years for the fruits of their labour.

Mark why the illustrious and respectable M. de Saint Lambert, whom you acknowledge to be distinguished by his talents, hath said most justly that he hath made “Georgics for men charged with the property of a country, and not for those who cultivate it. Because the “Georgics of Virgil could not be of any use to peasants—to give to this order of men lessons in verse “for their occupation would be an useless labour; but “it will be useful to inspire those whom the law elevates above the cultivators, with the good-will and “the regards that subsist between valuable citizens.”

Nothing is more true, Sir; for be assured that, if I were to read to the peasants of my village, the works and the days of Hesiod, the Georgics of Virgil, or yours, they would not comprehend them. I should consider myself obliged in conscience to make them restitution, if I should persuade them to cultivate their grounds, in Switzerland, as they do near Mantua.

The Georgics of Virgil will always be delicious to men of letters—not on account of their precepts, which are, for the most part, idle repetitions of vulgar opinions—not on account of the impertinent praises, and the infamous idolatry that he lavishes on the Triumvir Octavius, but on account of the admirable episodes, of the fine description of Italy in the passage of poesy and philosophy, so truly charming, beginning with these words,

“*O fortunatos nimium, &c.*”

On account of the terrible and affecting description of the plague; and in fine on account of the episode of Orpheus.

See why M. de Saint-Lambert gives to the Georgics, the epithet of charming, which you seem to condemn.

I should

I should with a bad grace, Sir, lament that you have been more severe towards me than towards M. de Saint-Lambert. You reproach me with having said, in my discourse to the Academy, that it was not possible to write Georgics in French—I said that they dared not to do it, and not that they could not. I lamented the timidity of authors, and not the weakness. I said that the properties of our language had been confined within too narrow limits. I announced you to the world, and it appears to me that you have treated your harbinger a little unkindly.

It seems that you are inclined to treat dramatic poetry in the same manner, when you say, “that prose hath had, at least as much share in the formation of our language as the poesy of the theatre,” and that “when Corneille produced his *Chefs-d’Œuvre*, Balzac and Pelisson had written, and Pascal was writing.”

In the first place we cannot account on Balzac: he is a writer of high flown phrases, who changed the nature of the epistolary stile, into insipid and far-fetched declamation.

In regard to Pelisson, he produced nothing before the *Cid* and *Cinna*.

The “*Lettres Provinciales*” of Pascal did not appear till 1654, and the tragedy of *Cinna*, written in 1742, was performed in 1743; so that it is evident, Sir, that Corneille was the first good writer and the father of our language.

Permit me to say, that it is not for you to depress poesy. It would be as proper for M. d’Alembert, and M. le Marquis de Condorcet to lower the mathematics—Let each have respect for his own excellence—That of M. de Saint Lambert is to have taught the proprietors of lands to be humane towards their vassals, and ministers to lighten the burden of taxes as much as the interest of the state will permit. He has embellished his poem with very agreeable episodes, he has written with sensibility, and imagination.

You, Sir, have joined precision to ornament. You have struggled, every moment, against the difficulties of our language, and have overcome them. M. de Saint Lambert hath sung for his mistress, and you have written for the king. La Fontaine hath said :

“ On ne peut trop louer trois sortes de personnes ;

“ Les dieux, la maitresse et son roi

“ Esôpe le disait ; j’y souscris quant a moi.”

We cannot praise three persons over much,

The gods, our Mistress, and our king :

Æsop has said it, and I own its just.

Æsop has never said any thing about it, but it is no matter.

I have the honour to be,

With the most respectful esteem, Sir,

Your's, &c.

L E T T E R

To the EDITOR of a NEW JOURNAL, intituled,

“ *Le Secretaire du Parnasse.*”

S I R,

Ferney, 7th December, 1770.

I HAVE received your “ *Secretaire du Parnasse.*”

If it has many pièces of verse equal to your own, it is likely to succeed a long time. But I see that your Secretary is not mine---He imputes to me an epistle to M——lle Ch——, comedian at Marfailles. I do not know M——lle Ch——, and I never had the honour to court any lady of Marfeilles. The “ *Journal Encyclopedique*,” some time ago, attributed to me these verses, in which I promise to M——lle Ch——.

“ Que

"Que malgré les Tyſiphônes

"L'amour unira nos perſonnes.

That in ſpite of the Tyſiphones
Love ſhall unite our perſons.

I do not know who theſe Tyſiphones are; but I declare to you, that the perſon of M——lle Ch—— hath never been united to mine, and never ſhall.

Be aſſured that I never could rhyme "Tyſiphônes," which is long, to "perſonnes," which is ſhort. Another time, when I make verſes, I will not rhyme ſo much for the eyes, as for the ear. I have a very great reſpect for the laſt in verſification.

Be aſſured alſo, Sir, "that my barbarous fate hath "not withdrawn me from the luſtre of M——lle Ch——'s "eyes," and "that I do not wander in my ſad career." I am ſo far from "wandering in my ſad career," that for theſe two years paſt I have ſcarcely gone from my bed, much leſs from that of M——lle Ch——. If I had been ſent there, ſhe would have been finely deceived.

I take this occaſion to tell you, in general, that it is exceedingly tedious to ſee theſe maſſes of rhyme multiplied, in which the authors ſay nothing, or merely repeat what has been ſaid a thouſand times. I do not know the lover of your gentle Marſeilleſe; but I adviſe him to be a little leſs prolix.

Befides, all theſe epiſtles to Aglaura, to Flora, to Phillis, are not written for the public. They are the amuſements of the ſocial circle, and it is ſometimes as ridiculous to collect them for the library, as it would be to print what is ſaid in common converſation.

Meſſieurs Cramer have done me no great ſervice in publiſhing the trifles in this taſte which at times eſcape me. I have written to them an hundred times not to do it. Theſe productions are the moſt inſipid things in nature. I have made as many of them as another; but I never add my name to them, nor join them to any of my works.

I am much hurt that they render me responsible after so long a time for that which I have written, and for that which I have not written. It is at length become a serious matter. I am no more than an old labourer, changed from the citizen into the suite of the Ephemerides—ploughing up the dry and the barren earth and sowing it; having no commerce with M—lle Ch—, with any Tyfiphône, nor with any person of his agreeable species.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your's, &c.

I add, that I was not born in 1695, as your engraver says, but in 1694, which hurts me more than the little likeness that there is in the portrait.

T O

M. M A R M O N T E L.

MY very dear, and good successor,—
Historiographer to be!

Thy undeserving predecessor
Sends his epitaph to thee.

At the close of fourscore years,
Here in solitude he lies;
Closed in woods, his life he wears;
And grasps the earth until he dies,

But on the eve of taking flight,
Far to the dark abyfs of night,
Where each his flight pursues;
Objects, day by day, start forth,
Recall him to the busy earth,
That here he came to lose.

If

If toward the eve a storm arise,
 And stain the beauty of the day;
 I think the more indulgent skies,
 Keep, from the court, such storm away.

If, in their tints of blue and gold,
 My gawdy peacocks I behold,

I call them beaux that shine:
 Prank'd in their brilliant rich array,
 Strutting in the face of day,
 And proud of being fine:
 While, in my Turkey-cocks, I see
 The aping mules, that beaux would be.

My cats like courtesans appear,
 The artful hypocrites:
 While foxes, snatching all that's near,
 Like cunning Jesuits.

Can I behold my bleating flocks,
 Daily, whom the wolf devours;
 And think not, while my heart it shocks,
 The soldier more destruction pours.

When all the warblers of the spring,
 On the new-invested spray,
 Around my rural cottage sing,
 And harmonise the day;
 Their melody enchants the sense;—
 But still Moncigni's notes dispense
 Diviner magic, greater skill,
 "And turn, and wind me at his will."

Brionne

Brionne comes, and, in surprize,
 We view the lustre of her eyes,
 See Pallas, Venus, nymph divine!
 The greatest praises we bestow,
 But all, who know them, still allow
 That Paris' Ladies are as fine.

THOMAS' sweet eulogy I read
 On Romes' and Athens' ladies made—
 And strait I'm call'd to Seine;
 Where more true beauty I shall see,
 And read, this boasted Eulogy,
 With less regret, and pain.

Thus, by the world undeceived,
 I'm call'd to life again:
 Am I not, a slave relieved,
 Still longing for the chain?

No—I'm not so weak, my friend,
 To sigh, and wish for time that's past;
 Better my life were at an end,
 Than, in such follies, time to waste.

Adieu—my friend! each hour employ;
 Yours is the age, the heart that charms;
 Pleasure, love, delight, and joy
 Hold you circled in their arms.

Justly are Historians graced,
 And highest in esteem are placed;
 But, my friend, so great, and able,
 What's your precious task?—a fable.

A N S W E R

T O

M. M A R M O N T E L.

FOR you all objects kindly glow;
Diviner beauties the dispense,
Chear the heart, and feast the sense,
While young again you daily grow.

The flowers rise up in every season;
Age we see without its ice;
The Graces in your aid rejoice,
While you enrich, and add to Reason.

When thro' your cottages you stray,
Joy sends forth her jocund train;
Buxom pleasure fills the plain,
And every look, and heart is gay.

Them, from each harm, you still defend,
Dispel their wants, and soothe their care,
No strife, nor murmur rages there,
For, e'en, to their tempers, you attend.

The world's the same, in ev'ry feature;
Such as you've so finely writ;
Nor can it give the least regret,
Art to lose, to live in Nature.

Sublime

Sublime in fault is nature seen,
While art's is mere caprice;
So low, so base is human vice,
While Nature's horrors raise the scene.

Our foxes, wolves are worse than yours;
More ravenous their trade:
Your dogs, between us be it said,
Are much more vigilant than ours.

GRETTRY, 'tis true, provokes the sense,
And loud the harmony he swells;
But Philomel's diviner thrills
To you give ample recompence.

Believe not all that THOMAS says;
He flatters, and enchants the eye,
For he to Necker's dame was nigh,
When he design'd his beauteous traits.

When shall it come, to bless our arms,
That many BRIONNES we possess?
Our land, at present, I confess
Not fertile is, nor full of charms.

'Tis true, indeed, that we are blest
With many a seducing face:
But where's the all-alluring grace
Of Beauty, that we once possess?

Let not this, however, tease you:

Trick'd, and jimp in fatten boddice,
Nymphs we have, but not a Goddess,
Nymphs, in Paris, form'd to please you.

When

When Zara to your eye appears,—
Breaks on the face of night, her charms—
Fill'd with all her fond alarms
She'll draw the rich applause of tears.

In Corneille's praises take your share ;
You, who've reared her for the stage ;—

Our tears, our transports, and our rage
Well repay your tender care.

Could I approach the mighty Pow'rs,

I'd say, how piteous the distress,

To sigh, at distance, for a bliss ;

While many pleasures might be yours,

But if, for the Paris you approve, I

You pray the Heav'n's in vain ;

At least I may approach th' plain,

That holds, immured, the man I love.

Yes ! I will come and see the shade—

The people you have blest ;

And, with those people, I will taste

The fond delights, that you have made,

Forth from your torch of truth, and light,

I'll strive to ravish sparks of fire ;

My bosom with the flame inspire,

And chase the clouds, that hang on night.

Hist'ry, I own, less pleasing seems,

Than fables that enchant :

Yet foolish is a man to pant,

And love the fair, he not esteems.

T A C

TACTICS.

A POEM, WITH NOTES.

PASSING, on Monday last, the shop of **CAILLE**;

Who seldom, has a book that's worth the while.—

"I've got," says he, "by chance, a work quite new;

"Useful to human kind, and wise as true;

"An Art, on which at times, each man reflects;

"It rules our destinies—take it—**TACTICS**."

TACTICS, says I, I do declare, till now,
Not half their worth and value did I know.

"The name" he answered "came from Greece to France;

"'Tis called **THE ART**, in grand pre-eminence, (1)

"And, of all noble men, it fills the breast,"

I bought the **TACTICS** and esteem'd me blest.

To lengthen life, I hoped, I'd found the art;

To banish each chagrin that fills the heart;

My taste to cultivate; my life to season,

And make desire subservient to reason;

To render justice—to myself be true;—

I therefore shut the door and read it through,

Intent to gain by heart, with instant labour,

The Art, my friends, the Art—to kill my neighbour.

I learn that, once in Germany, a Priest (2)

To dust, some brimstone, and saltpetre press:

That, with th' explosion, when the ball they throw

They aim it somewhat high, to fall more low.

That

That from the brazen tube Death hardly misses,
Which, in its flight, a parable expresses : (3)
If justly pointed, it o'erthrows in piles,
The blue Automaton arranged in files.
The musket, cannon, bayonet, sword and shell
All are esteem'd, all precious, when they kill.

Further, he paints the midnight murder'ing scouts,
Who, thro' some secret ways, pursue their routes ;
And, charged discreetly with their swords in hand,
Assassinate the Centries on their stand ;
Advancing hastily, they mount the steep,
While seemingly secure the people sleep :
To each abode they carry sword, and flames ;
And tear the husbands, from the weeping dames ;
Dash out the infant's brains—and, out of breath,
Carouse, and revel in the midst of death.
Then, in the morning, they their God address,
And thank his goodness, for their great success ;
In Latin, tell him, he's their prop, their aid ;
Thro' him, the city is in ashes laid ;
That they could neither rob, nor roam abroad,
Nor massacre mankind without their God.

Strangely surprized at this so boasted Art,
Back I return'd to CAILLE, with wounded heart,
And throwing him his book, in warmth, I said,
“ Go, thou by Satan for his uses made,
“ Thy Tactics give to the Chevalier de Tot,
“ (You'll find him with the Turks, named de Sabot,)
“ Who covers with his guns, the Dardanelles,
“ And murders Christians with his Infidels.
“ Go, address yourself, at once, to Romanzof ;
“ To those who conquer'd Bender, and Azof :

“ But

- " But first to **FREDERIC** bestow your skill,
 " And be assured he knows its meaning well ;
 " More skill to him did **Lucifer** impart, (4)
 " And pass'd him, **MASTER** of the horrid **ART** ;
 " A greater murderer than the great **Eugene**,
 " Or great **Gustavus** ;—nay—there ne'er hath been,
 " From **God's** high hand produced a creature,
 " Like him, his **God** t'insult—to ravage nature,
 " Such rage, such wild ambition to dispense,
 " Man, with ten fingers, but without defence,
 " With his own life, was ne'er design'd to sport,
 " Which sad necessity hath made so short,
 " The gout's sad touches,—and the hard'ning stone,
 " That, in the bladder, forms a stone in time ;
 " The fever—the catarrh, ills, in hundreds, worse ;
 " An hundred Quacks to add to every curse ;
 " These, no doubt, th' earth are suffered to torment :—
 " To these, must Man the **ART OF WAR** invent ?
 " My heart each hero, down from **Cyrus**, hates,
 " Ev'n to this King who **LENTULUS**' creates : (5)
 " In vain, they boast their brilliant deeds of evil ;
 " I turn my back, and give them to the Devil."

Thus I express'd myself—while, listening nigh,
 A youth had mark'd me with a curious eye :
 His uniform two epaulets did grace,
 Which his profession, and his rank express :
 His mien was steady, tranquil, and serene,
 His talents, not his courage, there were seen :
 In short, it was the Author of the book,
 He thus accosted me, with modest look,

" I can

" I can perceive," says he, " you disapprove;
 " You are an old Philosopher, and love
 " Mankind intire—This Art is not humane,
 " But needful to the earth, I say't with pain,
 " Where many an ABEL has a brother CAIN.
 " The HUNS, the FRANKS, the GOTHs, all bursting forth,
 " From TANAI's borders to o'er-run the earth;
 " Had ne'er gone further, than the banks of SEINE,
 " If we in ROMAN TACTICS skill'd had been.—
 " A Soldier, born of a soldier, from my birth,
 " I've studied how to guard, not hurt the earth;
 " Then why lament that I should strive to aid?
 " Be pleased, that now no GOTH will dare t'invade
 " Your woods, your crops, your lawns, domains,
 " Nor ravage, spoil, and lay in waste your plains.
 " From fell destruction, and from lawless shocks,
 " Keep you not careful dogs to save your flocks?
 " Then, Sir, as War is just, and right, at times,
 " Say not, that great exploits are horrid crimes.
 " Hath not your Muse, herself, profess'd ere now,
 " To twine the laurel for her Henry's brow?
 " Well he maintain'd his right of birth august,
 " The league was criminal, but he was just.
 " Tho' *his* great actions mayn't your mind employ,
 " Have you forgot the day of FONTENOY?
 " When the brave English column stood the field,
 " And tho' they fought like men, were forc'd to yield.
 " Fortunate Man! in Paris thou wert set
 " Laughing, to wage, as usual, war with wit,
 " And ogle Madame Goffin from the pit,
 " When actors made a fault to let them know it.
 " Alas! what would have come of every Poet?
 " What of all Paris?—if, that very Sun,
 " Our King, in person, had not pass'd Calonne.

" Had not our Cæsars all, for fourpence hired,
 " The English braved who came, and who expired.
 " You know the Man who, glory to receive,
 " With four small cannon did the field retrieve.
 " For the price paid by generous Grammont,
 " By the wise Luttaux, and the young Craon,
 " Some of your geniuses their mem'ries greet,
 " And songs, and madrigals infest the street.
 " The same, or such who come, with envious grin,
 " To his Semiramis, Meropé, Orph'lin.
 " So that, like Mars, Apollo takes to arms ;
 " The Church, the Bar, the Court have their alarms ;
 " From forth their garrets, Clement, Sabatier dispense,
 " In heaps of paper bullets, war with sense. (6)
 " Permit a Soldier, then, the Art t'advance,
 " That long shall grandeur give, and strength to France ;
 " And all our Citizens, with peace shall bless."
 Here GUIBERT, bowing, ended his Address.

I made not a reply—the truth I saw,
 And felt the force of reason's sovereign law.
 I look'd on War the first of human Arts ;
 On him, the painter of Bourbons, Bayards, (7)
 Who made the science, in his numbers, swell,
 Fit to command, in what he knew so well,

Yet in my breast, I own, there rose a sigh,
 I wish'd the Art, from want of use, might die ;
 That equity, on earth might bring to bear
 Th' ideal peace, o'the Abbé de la Saint-Pierre.

N O T E S.

(1) **T**ACTIC came originally from the verb *taffo*, I arrange.—Tactic is properly the art of going in ranks—it is the arrangement of troops—it is that which made Pyrrhus, on seeing the Roman camp, declare that they were not so barbarous as he had esteemed them.

(2) [*In Germany, a Priest.*] We do not yet know who first employed guns in battles and in sieges. An invention which has, so wholly, changed the art of war, in all the known world, deserves more research, and attention; but we are ignorant of the origin of almost every thing. Who was the first inventor of a boat? Who first imagined the art of rendering pliable the branch of an ash-tree, binding it with a cord drawn from the intestines of an animal, and adding to it a rod, adorned at the one end with an ivory or an iron pin, and at the other with four quills? Who first discovered the shuttle, the oven, and the mill?—Of the prodigious multitude of arts, which succour, or which destroy life, there is scarcely one, of which the original author is known. It is, because no person hath of himself discovered an intire art.—Architects did not arise till thousands of years after we had caverns and huts.

The Chinese had discovered the inflammable powder, and made it to assist in their ingenious amusements, at their feasts, two thousand years, before the Jesuits, Shall and Verbieff, formed cannon for the conquering Tartars towards the year 1630. There were then two religious Germans who taught the use of artillery in this vast part of the world, as it was, say they, by another German Monk, named Shwartz, or the black Monk, who discovered the secret of inflammable powder, in the fourteenth century, but they do not tell us in what year.

They have pretended that Roger Bacon, an English Monk, almost an hundred years after the German Monk, was the real inventor of this powder.—The following are the words of this Bacon, which we find in his *Opus Majus*, page 454, great Oxford edition.

“ We have a proof of sudden explosions in the amusement, which children practise all over the world.—They put a quantity of saltpetre, into a hollow ball, of an inch diameter, and make it burst, with a noise so violent, that it surpasses a clap of thunder, and there issues an exhalation of fire, like that of lightning.”

There is certainly a great distance between a little ball filled with simple saltpetre and our artillery, but it is very probable, that the one should give rise to the other.

It appears to be altogether false, that the English employed cannon in their victory of Cressy, in 1346, and in that of Maupertius ten years afterwards.—The history of the Tower of London, by Rimer, says something of it.

Many of our historians have assured us, that there now is in the city of Amberg, in the high Palatinate, a cannon founded in the year 1301, and that this date is engraved on its breech.

Now mark how justly the historians write.

They write and print this error at Paris, with so much assurance, that I wrote to M. le Cote de Holnstein, of Bavaria, governor of the country of Amberg.—He gave me an authentic certificate, that a founder of cannon named M . . . famous enough in his time, died in 1501, and that they placed a small cannon on his tomb-stone, with the date 1501.—He had the goodness to transmit to me a draught of the inscription.—It is astonishing, that they should take 1501, for 1301, but historians love the antique and the marvellous.

I have

I have hardly more faith in the bombard, or battering ram of Foiffard, which was more than fifty feet in length, and which made so great a noise in going along, that it appeared as if all the infernals were in the road.—It was apparently a species of the ancient *Balast*.

I doubt much more the register of Du Drach, treasurer of war, in 1338: "To Henry Faumechon, for having powder and other things necessary for the cannon in his possession before Puisguillaume."—Ducange reports this, but he bound himself to do so. He did not examine if there were even treasurers of war at that time.—He did not inform himself if they besieged a Puisguillaume, or a Puisguiliem in Perigord. It does not appear that they performed any war-like exploit in Perigord, in the year 1338.—If they mean the little village of Puisguillaume, in Bourbonny, it does not appear that there was any castle in it at all.—It is reasonable, therefore, to doubt it, which is indeed, in most of their tales, the only part we can take.

All that appears certain, is, that three Monks have contributed to the destruction of men and cities, by the invention of artillery; and by adding to these three Monks the Jesuits, Shall and Verbieft, the number will be five.

(3) When a ball is fired, or an arrow thrown horizontally, they go in a right line, but the gravitation continually impels them to descend, in another straight line, to the centre of the earth; and to combine these two directions, they measure a curved line, called the parabole, at the letters "going high."—If a canonier were to study all the proprieties of this curved line applicable to the occasion, he would not have time to fire his gun.

- (4) "More skill to him did Lucifer impart;
 "And passed him Master of the horrid Art;
 "A greater murderer than the great EUGENE,
 "Or great GUSTAVUS."

A very warm dispute arose on these lines.—The one side took them to be a reproach, and the other a panegyric.—It is evident that he could not make a greater eulogy on a warrior, than in ranking him above the prince Eugene and Gustavus. It was said, that to wish to condemn this comparison, was to wish to quarrel about a song.

(5) The king of Prussia forms all his generals himself.

(6) [Clement and Sabatier.] See the notes on the dialogue between Pegasus and the Old Man.

(7) [The Bourbons, Bayards.] Mr. Guibert wrote the tragedy of the Constable Bourbon, in which the Chevalier Bayard speaks most admirably.

A D I A L O G U E.

B E T W E E N

PEGASUS AND AN OLD MAN.

W I T H N O T E S.

PEGASUS.

WHAT do you do, my friend, in this lone spot,
This barren country, and this ruined cot?

OLD MAN.

I exercise a great, and useful Art,
And aid to Nature in her works, impart;
I cultivate the desert, build, and sow. (1)

PEGASUS.

P E G A S U S.

Oh! that thy senses thus should listless grow!
Thy taste thus changed! thus froze with years!
That no Parnassus to thy eye appears!
Come mount—

O L D M A N.

I cannot; let me here remain.
Hath not Apollo been a shepherd swain?

P E G A S U S.

He hath, but, re-instated in his ancient right,
Now, in the plains of Heaven, he sows the light.
With new enchantment, he reawakes the lyre,
And leads the concert in the Muses choir.
In all his footsteps then do you proceed,
And, to their Temple, will the Muses lead:
Happily guided thro' the crowd along,
And following Vade's great and magic song, (2)
A seat in Genius' highmost dome acquire.

O L D M A N.

Alas! I've felt, ere now, this noble fire.
By treacherous, silly hope I was deceived,
To think, my friend, my labours were received:
They mock'd the ardour that my bosom swell'd;
With pain I mounted, but each seat was fill'd:
The number chose, take up each splendid throne:
We may go play, our fires the work have done.
When the sweet Pink, Narcissus, and the Rose,
Each, to the morning Bee, its balm bestows;
The Drones, at night, approach in vain to sip
Th' exhausted perfume of Aurora's lip.

Beside, Parnassus, and thy noble stall,
 The Dome of Glory is but Envy's hall.
 Homer the great, tho' all admired and wonder'd,
 Had but one follower, Zoilus had a hundred.

This Mountain, double-top'd, with pain I climb,
 Which Poetry, of old, hath given to rhyme;
 Where sad Melpomene, in sorrow, moves,
 And sings of martial fame, and antient loves.
 To view her beauties near, myself I feat,
 Snug in a crevice under Corneille's feet;
 But Martin Freron, (3) strait, with rage intense,
 Perceives me in the niche, and drives me thence:
 By this great Judge, thus banish'd from my place,
 Without a friend, but humble in disgrace,
 I wish'd to smooth, with flattering regards,
 And bring to lenity, my Brother Bards;
 But all in vain; their clamours louder grow,
 And no fraternal friendship do they know.
 My rival Sabatier (4) grows worse in worse,—
 'Tis well Parnassus keeps a single horse,
 Had there been two, he'd murder'd them at once,
 For fellowship is torment to a dunce.

I've seen true genius, on this stormy coast,
 And know, most truly, what the danger cost!
 Must I, at sixty years, the fight still hold
 With Writers so profound, and men so bold?
 Be still in faction, constantly in Hell,
 And keep the field with Guyon, (5) and Beaumelle? (6)
 Their numbers fright me.—Let my troubles cease,
 To taste the pleasures of insipid peace.

Another

Another secret let me give your ear,
 The correspondence of our friends is dear,
 The brother husband still his love presents,
 And fills each Letter with his sentiments.
 I open oft my heart in verse, or prose,
 Let me cry "Fool," and to the press it goes.
 While to the surreptitious copy they adjoin
 The works of cousin Vadé or Bazin.
Candidus, prisoned in my closet lies,
 "All's for the best" exclaims, and forth he flies. (7)
 Jean and the tender Agnes, huge Bonneau,
 From Geneva, run heedless to Breslau.
 Four Benedictines, with their ductile pens,
 Furnish'd these volumes with a world of pains.
 How, my dear son, can I pursue my way,
 With such gross baggage, to posterity?
 To multiply the load, some bastards rude,
 Whom fortune had repulsed, on me obtrude;
 Of Charnier born "the Innocents" their name,
 And as my true born Infants, succour claim. (8)
 This is too much—too hard for man to prove,
 I must renounce the Muses that I love.
 All love, respect, and friendship has an end;
 Go—I continue here, while you ascend.

P E G A S U S.

Rash your distaste is—your chagrins unjust,
 Around your brows, the Goddesses august,
 A sprig of that same laurel, gladly plait,
 Which crown'd Saint Didier, (9) Chapelain, Desmaret.
 How oft do you behold the frantic scene,
 When under Clairon's name, the tragic Queen,

And

And eloquent la Kain new life infuse,
 And add fresh spirit, to thy languid Muse?
 Correcting by their tones that all beguile,
 Your cold expression, and your high-flown stile.
 Of whom do you complain? The truth avow,
 Whom do the Men of sense love more than you?
 Have they not raised a statue to your name,
 To which their merits had the fairest claim?
 In spite of rivals, don't I see Pigal
 Hath placed your figure on the pedestall?
 Hath cut the crevice in your lank lean cheek,
 More of the Connoisseur, than the Antique?
 Freron I see, with envy half devour'd,
 Biting, with his fangs, the ebon board.
 I see your bust, distracted with grimace,
 To view this gnawing viper of Ignace:
 With you we laugh—beneath your feet we tread
 And trample on each humbled wretch's head;
 They roll in dirt, consign'd to stink and rot;
 Sabatier on Clement; (10) Patouillet (11) on Nonotte; (12)
 Their clamours, for a while, our mirth increase.

O L D M A N.

The cries of the unhappy cannot please,
 From whom did you receive these flatteries?
 Youth is malicious, but old age is wise.
 The Sage, in his retreat, content to find,
 Nor seeks, nor shuns; but bears with human kind;
 No strife, no quarrel, in his bosom dwells,
 With Authors or with Kings, with Monks or Belles.
 He sees at distance, thus in silence warp'd,
 Three Polish countries quietly usurp'd;

In

In Rome Saint Ignace fall in Peter's snare;
 In Paris Clement raised o'er le Mierre.
 While in the rural cottage the reverse,
 The Sage lives happily, nor thinks of verse.
 The Abbé Tenai, for a state distressed,
 Prefers a labouring Oeconomist,
 To all our frantic Bards, he never reads;
 For Triptolemus best supplies our needs.
 From the good Farmer, more advantage springs,
 Than when a Virgil, or a Hesiod sings.
 Want, reason, instinct urge us all along;
 To make our harvests, rather than a song:
 Nay, I would rather yoke THEE in my team,
 Than on thy back, thro' clouds attempt to swim.

P E G A S U S.

Chief of Ingrates! thus Poets to reprove;
 As Age, when impotent, harrangues on love;
 And when exhausted boasts that he is wise.
 Then—weakly write, as weak as you surmise.
 Corneille, grey-headed, wantonly did soar,
 When Attila and him aloft I bore;
 And proud I was of this his latter course;—
 Each mortal to the end should keep his horse:
 Nor can I bear this base, and groveling change,
 What quit you Pegasus, to keep a grange!
 Know, that a Villager, devoid of sense,
 And but the drudge of mere experience,
 Produces richer crops, and better grains,
 Than even Mirabeau with all his pains. (13)
 Leave then the toil to mercenary care,
 And, to the Labourers, give the spade, and square.

Think

Think you were made for high Olympus top,
 To think with Plato, and to write with Pope.
 Or into sportful measure to translate
 Epicurus' system of a happy state.—
 For the last time then instantly ascend.

O L D M A N.

No—for all systems equally offend.
 More verse! more philosophic strife!
 And, in the search of truth, consume my life!
 I walk at night without a guide to save;
 Can I see clearly when so near the grave.
 Forth from the gift of thought, what light can flow,
 When, in the socket sunk, it burns so low?
 Too much I've thought. Those who, in its growth,
 From kindness, in their wells, have sunk the truth,
 Have oft lamented that, from thence 'twas caught,
 I'm dumb. I neither know, nor speak of aught.

P E G A S U S.

Then vegetate and die—To Paris I return,
 Where many, for my presence, nobly burn.
 Some in their garrets great Republics form;
 Others all Monarchy profess to storm.
 There are who can, afar from vulgar eyes,
 Without the aid of verse, ascend the skies.
 Fortunate Sharers of ætherial fire!
 Who all things can create, and all inspire.
 Now do they want my aid aloft to soar
 I who have Rena (14) in the whirlwinds bore.
 His scholar, more a fool, not less superb
 On me was mounted when he spoke to Verbe; (15)

Prose

Prose friends I have, and many more sublime,
 Than your Pindaric sons of sacred rhyme.
 I go—to gallop with them to the highmost spheres:

OLD MAN.

God speed your voyage to the world of chimeras. (16)

N O T E S

B Y

MR. DE MORZA.

(1) [I Cultivate the desert.] Our author broke in some lands more rebellious, than the very worst lands of Bourdeaux, or even of Campania, and they have produced very fine wheat. But these attempts so tedious and expensive, cannot be imitated by the farmers. The Government ought to take the charge upon itself, and recommend this immense labour to an intendant—the intendant to a sub-deputy, and by that means prepare it for the reception of the cavalry.

(2) [Vadé.] A loose Writer, under whose name the author of “the Scotchwoman” modestly concealed himself.

(3) [Martin Freron.] Martin is not his christian, but merely his warlike name.—He set himself for twenty years against the author of this Dialogue, to make his productions sell. “Qua mensura mensi fueritis, eadem remetietur vobis.” He brought upon himself the Scotchwoman and we are sorry for it.

(4) [My rival Sabatier.] The Abbé Sabotier, or Sabatier, native of Castres, did not employ himself in the same manner as the Bard of Henry IV, and the Painter who designed the ages of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. So that he cannot be his rival.—If the latter had applied himself to the same studies, he must have been his Master.

This Abbé, in the year 1771, produced a Dictionary of Literature, in which he is lavish of extravagant panegyrics.—It did not sell; but in the year 1772, he published another, under the name of the “Three Ages,” in which he is lavish of calumnies, and it sold well. He insults d’Alembert, St. Lambert, Marmontel, Thomas, Diderot, Bauzée, La Harpe, l’Ile, and twenty other living authors, whose memories he must have respected if they had been dead.

But he, whom messieurs Sabatier and Clement have attacked, with the most vehement rancour, is an old man, of fourscore years who could not defend himself.

It is permitted—it is useful to publish our sentiments on books, especially when there appears solid or at least specious reasons for so doing.—If he had acted merely for the good of literature, we say it is most unjust to accuse the author of the *Henriade*, and of the *Age of Louis XIV*, employed in celebrating the glory of the great men of that age, of not having done justice to them.—We say, that no person ever spoke with more sensibility of the admired scenes of Corneille; of the despairing perfection (as M. de la Harpe expresses it) of the style of Racine; of the perfection less despairing of the “*Art of Poetry*,” and the many fine epistles of Boileau.

We say, that his list of the great Writers of this memorable age, contains an argumentative panegyric on the imitable Moliere, whom he regards as superior to all the comic writers of antiquity; on Fontaine, who hath surpassed Phedrus in simplicity and grace; on Quinault, who
neither

neither had models, nor rivals in his opera. We say, that he has rendered the justest praises to Bossuet, to Fenslon and to all the men of genius, taste, and learning.

We add, that he would have been unworthy to have estimated their extreme beauties, if he had not been capable of perceiving their faults, inseparable as they are from human weakness.—That it would have been the greatest impertinence to have placed in the same rank, Cinna and Pertharites, Polyuctes and Theodore, and, of admiring equally, the excellent fables of Fontaine, and those in which he was not so happy. He who criticises, must do more than this; he must be able to discover, in the same work, one beauty in the midst of faults; one error in the language; and one unjust thought in observations the most sublime. It is here in which true taste consists—And we can assure the world, that the author of the Age of Louis XIV, after sixty years study, had at that time as much right to give his opinion, as M. Sabatier has at this day.

But he employed himself in more important accusations. It is trifling then in this Abbé, in the hope of pleasing his superiors, of whose equity and discernment he was ignorant, to impute to a hundred authors of the present day the most odious opinions—He has the cruelty to call them “irreligious, and impious.”—He says in express terms, that the author of the *Henriade* denied the immortality of the soul.—It was enough to ravish from him the immortality of *Alzira*, of *Zara*, and of *Merope*, of which we are sensible he is little jealous, and which he does not defend.—It is too hard to despoil him of his soul, at the age of eighty, the only life that can remain to him in the time to come.—This proceeding is unjust and foolish; so much the more foolish, as it obliges us to display the soul of the Abbé in its present state.

We have seen and read, and we now hold in our hands
 “*Spinosa* commented on, explained, cleared, and embellished”
 —all

—all written by the hand of Monsieur l'Abbé Sabotier, and we will place this monument in the hands of a Notary, or in a Register, whenever he will give us his permission; for we would not wish to dispose of such a writing without the consent of the author—It is a regard which we owe to one another.

As to the learned Poetry of this great Critic and great Missionary, we shall use a little of it more freely.—Behold the proofs of the piety of this Abbé, who is so little indulgent to the sins of his neighbour.—Behold the proofs of the good taste of him who finds the verses of St. Lambert, of l'Ile, and of la Harpe, to be so bad.

While he remained in prison, where his worthy conduct had placed him at Strasbourg, he amused himself, to waste the time, in writing a story called the . . . bad place.—This story begins as follows—and our readers will remark that we have it written, with his own hand—with the same hand that wrote Spinosa.

Du toms que la dame Pâris
Tenait école florissante;
De jeux d'amour à juste prix,
D'une écolière assez savante.

Sur les bords de la Seine un jour la pied glissa,
La chose assurément n'était pas merveilleuse,
Mais la chute dans l'eau n'était pas périlleuse,
Lorsqu'un Mousquetaire passa.

Il crut que ce serait une perte publique
Que la perte de tant d'appas.
Aussi, plein d'ardeur héroïque
Mit-il, sans hésiter, chemise et pourpoint bas, &c.

For love's delights, when Paris dame
Kept a school renown'd ;
At such a price, as well became
A scholar so profound.

One day she slippt her foot, and fell
Into the river Seine ;
(Such accidents have oft befell,
And here no danger's seen.)

A Musqueteer did aptly pass,
And saw her sad alarms
He swore t'would be a public loss,
Beside the loss of charms.

With noble ardour, quick he hied,
To rescue her from hurt ;
And in a twinkling threw aside,
His breeches and his shirt, &c.

We with-hold the remainder of this delicate piece, without hesitation, from the eyes of our chaste readers. This is but a pattern of the elegant composition of Monsieur l'Abbé of the three ages.

We request his pardon, for publishing one other morsel of his prose, much more affecting, and much more decisive, (all written with his hand, and signed "Sabotier de Castres.")

"On n'aime ici que les processions, les sermons & les masses. Les gens qui ont eu la force de secouer le joug des préjugés de l'enfance, du fanatisme et de l'erreur, en un mot, les hommes qui pensent bien n'osent se faire connaître, &c. &c."

They love nothing here but processions, sermons, and masses.—Those men who have had strength to overcome the thralldom of their childish opinions, fanaticism, and error;—in short, the men who think justly, dare not avow their thoughts.

We shall give the remainder of this, should the sample give him pleasure.

Judge in the mean time, reader, if it becomes this gallant man to treat a secretary of one of our academies, with the epithets of impious and profligate; and to say as much of our most illustrious writers. It is believed he will always have a benefice; but what recompense will the royal censor have who obtains for him a quiet permission to preach virtue, and the gospel?

They say that he is already shaven, and that being about to be elevated to the dignities of the church, he will believe in God.—It will be merely in acknowledgement; for in spite of his spinosism, he must confess, that it is contrary to all human policy, not to admit of a supreme Being, the rewarder of virtue, and the avenger of crimes. We pray him to recollect this verse of M. de Voltaire.

“ Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer.”

If there exists no God, we must invent one.

This philosopher, a short time ago, wrote to a very great prince, “ that of all the indifferent verses he ever made, “ the above was the least indifferent, and that with which “ he was the least displeased.”—He had the greatest reason:—an atheist is perhaps as dangerous, if we may dare to say so, as a fanatic; for the fanatic is an enraged wolf, who devours and sucks the blood of men, believing he does well; yet the atheist can commit every secret crime, knowing well that he acts viciously, but assure himself of his security from punishment.—See how the two great legislators,

flators, Locke and Penn, who have admitted all religions into Carolina and Pennsylvania, have formally excluded atheism.

(5) [Guyon.] Author of an insipid libel against our author, intitled "l'Oracle des Philosophes."

(6) [Langleviel, called la Beaumelle.] Another writer of libels, as ridiculous as they are detestable, against the court.—Our author must be pardoned for having punished these fellows, no otherways than by publishing their names, and simply exposing their calumnies.

(7) They have printed five or six volumes of pretended letters of our author.—This is not honest—they have introduced many false ones which is still less so, but the editors had interest alone in view.

(8) There have slipped into the collection of our author's works, many pieces which are not his, such as "A Translation of the Apocryphas of Fabricius," which is by M. Bigex. "A Dialogue between Pericles and a Russian," which is much esteemed, and of which the author is M. Suard. "Verses on the death of M—lle Lecouvreur," less esteemed, beginning with this verse

Quel contraste frappe mes yeux ?
Melpomène ici desolée
Eleve avec l'aveu des Dieux,
Un magnifique mausolée.

What contrast now strikes my eyes ?
Melpomene, in tears,
Brings to my view the Deities,
And a Maus'leum rears.

This piece is by Sr. Bonneval, preceptor of old Mr. de Montmartel.—If he had a sight of the Deities, Apollo does not seem to have been of the party.

We find in the collection of M. de V's works, some pretended verses of Mr. Clairaut, which he never made. One piece which has for its title "les Avantages de la raison," The Advantages of reason, in which there is neither rhyme nor reason.—An Epistle to M—lle Salé, which is written by Mr. Thiriot.—An Epistle to the Abbé de Rothelin, by M. de Formont.—Verses on the death of Mad. du Châtelet, the author of which we do not know.

Verses to the Duke of Orleans, régent, which he never wrote.

An Ode, intitled "le vrai Dieu," the true God, which is by a Jesuit named Lefèvre.

An Epistle of the Abbé de Grecourt, flat and licentious, and which begins with these words,

"Belle Maman soyez l'arbitre."

Sweet Mamma be you the judge.

Verses by the Physician Silva, to the Oculist Gendron—
An answer to a M. de B. which begins thus,

Oui, mon cher B . . . il est l'ame du monde,
Sa chaleur le pénètre et sa clarté l'inonde,
Effets d'une même action
Sa plus belle production
Est cette lumière éthérée.

Dont Newton le premier, d'une main inspirée,
Separa les couleurs par la refraction.

Yes, my dear B . . . it is the world's soul.
Its warmth, its light pervades the whole,
In undivided action,
The greatest, best production
Is this light, admired.

Of which, first Newton, with a hand inspired,
Resolved the colours by refraction.

Beautiful composition ! may those who attributed the lines to M. de Voltaire, be blest with the most finished taste, and may their hands be inspired !

Verſes to a pretended Marquis de T. on the philoſophy of Newton, in which we find this elegant ſeries.

Tout eſt en mouvement. La terre eſt ſuspendue ;
En atôme léger nâge dans l'etendue.
L'eſpace, ou plutôt Dieu dans ſon immenſeté,
Balance ſur ſon poids l'univers agité.
Les travaux de la nuit, les phaſes ſont prédites.
Newton des premiers mois retraça les orbites.

All is in motion. Earth is hung in air ;
Light atoms ſwim and occupy the ſphere ;
Space, or God in the extent of ſpace,
— Holds balanced on his finger gen'ral place.
The nightly courſe, the phaſes are foretold ;
Newton the months great orbits did unfold.

And the Swiſs editors who have printed theſe inſipidities, brought from Paris, have the aſſurance to ſay in a note that it is an actual leſſon.

They have made, however, an immenſe collection of theſe trifles, without ever conſulting the author, which is as incredible, as it is true.—So much the worſe for thoſe bookſellers, who have thus diſhonoured their art, and literature in general.

It was on this that the author ſaid : they make my inventory, although I am not dead, and every one flips in his moveables to ſell them.

(9) [St. Didier.] M. Clement and M. Sabotier have said, that our author stole his *Henriade*, from a poem, intitled “*Clovis*,” by M. St. Didier. This is very shameful, for this *Clovis* did not appear till three years after the *Henriade*—but an error of three years is a trifle.

There hath escaped one of fifteen years, from M. l'Abbé Sabotier; for he says that our author pillaged his *Age of Louis XIV.* from the “*Annales politiques*,” of the Abbé de St. Pierre.—But the *Age of Louis XIV.* was printed, for the first time, in 1752, and the work of the Abbé de St. Pierre in 1767.—On which an arch fellow, remembering unluckily that Sabotier is the son of a peruke-maker, in Castres, whom he drove from thence, hath observed, that he ought rather to have made perukes for the author of the *Henriade*, than cruelly to despoil him of his pretended laurels, and expose his head, at fourscore years of age, to the rigour of the seasons.

(10) [Clement.] This writer came from Dijon to Paris, with his Tragedy of Charles the First, and his Tragedy of Medea.—He could not procure them to be represented;—necessity pressed him, and he engaged with a bookseller to furnish criticisms against the first books that should meet with success.—He received some money on account for these satires to come. M. de St. Lambert soon after produced his *Seasons*; M. de l'Île his Translation of Virgil; Mr. Dorat his Poem on Declamation; M. Vatelet his Poem upon Painting; and quickly the learned Clement set himself to write against these masters of the art, and gave them lessons as to a number of pupils with whom he was displeased. If they had merely possessed this ridicule, we should not have spoken of them, because they would not have been known: but to render these lessons more poignant, he mingled with them personal abuse, and he outraged, in a most violent manner, one very respectable lady. He was discovered, and the Police sent the pedant to prison, I know not whether to that of Bicêtre, or the Fort l'Eveque. M.
de

de St. Lambert had the generosity to solicit his enlargement, and he procured it. What did the critic then apply to?—He attempted to persuade the world that he had been so corrected for having taught the art of writing, and for having supported the cause of good taste, which was on the eve of expiring in France, and that like Freron he was the victim of his great talents.

Discharged from prison, he produced another libel, in which he insults a member of the great council chamber, son to a member of the chamber of accounts. He says ingeniously, that he is son to a pastry-cook, and the magistrate in disdain, remands him to the prison of Bicêtre.—He there associates with Freron, Sabotier, and other beings of the same species. He produces libel upon libel on a solitary old man, retired from the world more than thirty years, and whom he could outrage unpunished. He had written before this many letters to this same recluse, of which we have the originals in our hands—Accept a sample of them.

“Judge, Sir, if your silence does not afflict me. Perhaps, alas! you have imagined, that I pay your friendship and your favours with the blackest ingratitude, and that I am too base, and too criminal, to be more acknowledged, as well as others! Ah, Sir, do not injure me with such suspicions of my probity.—That is the precious gem which I would preserve free from the general contagion; your suspicions tarnish it. Your generosity, and your grandeur of soul, can preserve and raise it into the highest respect.—My affection, my zeal, my respect are altogether your own, and will ever remain, &c.—Dijon, 6th December, 1769.”

He had afterwards the respect to disavow this letter, and the probity to aver that it was forged. We preserve it, however, for although it is not a curious production, it is always a living testimony to the honourable conduct of this

pitiful cavalier.—It is this that made one say to M. Duclos, secretary of the academy, that he knew of none more contemptible, and more infamous, than the Canaille of literature. It is believed that M. Clement, being now married, will become more just and sensible; that he will become more modest, and no more calumniate, those persons, at least, against whom he has no subject of complaint; that he will not even any more shew his face, but retire and repent of having begun the world with so infamous a conduct.

(11) [Patouillet on Nonotte.] Patouillet is an Ex-Jesuit, who delivered, for some years, college-declamations under the name of Mandates, for such bishops as could not make them themselves.—He delivered one against our author, and other men of letters.—It is pity that he was burnt in the hand by the common hangman.—This Patouillet was one of the most nervous writers, of the calumniating tribe, that we have after Garasse.

(12) [Nonotte] Is another Ex-Jesuit, and a worthy companion of Patouillet.—He produced two huge volumes under the title of “The Errors of Voltaire,” but which ought to have been intitled The Errors of Nonotte.—He begins with reproaching the author of “The Essay on the general History of the Manners and the Spirit of nations,” with having said that “Christian Ignorance regards the reigns of the Roman Emperors as a continual Bartholomew.”—The author said no such thing. Nonotte, to render odious him whom he attacks, has of his own accord most graciously added the word christian. The author does not speak there of the other Emperors, but Diocletian alone, whom Galerius prevailed upon to be a persecutor, after a nineteen years reign of clemency and toleration. On which the author hath remarked the error of all our chronologists, in placing the æra of martyrdom at the first year of his reign. They ought to have dated it at the year 303, and not at 284.

He

He hath made the author say that Dioclesian "only punished those christians who were inflamed, obstinate and factious." The author has not said a word of this, and indeed he could not say so—He has not so far forgot his French as to say "*hommes brauillons*."

Nonotte accuses our author with having said that Charlemagne was no other than a successful robber. The author has written nothing like it. So that there are in the compass of two pages three calumnies of which Nonotte is detected. M. Damilaville condescended to take the trouble of discovering two or three hundred errors of the same genius, which are printed at the end of the Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations. Nonotte was astonished that he should have been so much wanting in respect—what—to him who had the honour to preach in a village of Franche-Comté, and to govern a *sixieme*.—Pride ought to be good—it only is perfect when supported by ignorance.

(13) [Mirabeau with all his art.] He has encouraged agriculture by his book, intitled "The Friend of Man—kind."

(14) René Descartes was an excellent geometrician, but all his philosophy is founded in chimeras.

(15) It is known that Mallebranche entertained a familiarity with Verbe, although the first part of his book on the Errors of Sense and Imagination is a *chef-d'œuvre* of philosophy.

(16) [To the world of Chimeras.] Nothing is more chimerical, in fact, than the greatest part of our systems of physics. Burnet and Woodward have only written a chain of argumentative absurdities on the general deluge. Mallebranche hath invented little whirlwinds for explaining light and colours, and that too, twenty years after Newton had produced his optics. Reaumur hath dared to maintain at Paris, in the Academy of Sciences, that the bones of the dead

dead produce turquoises; and it is known, that his imaginations on the production of iron have ruined his family. Maillet hath dared to say, that the sea hath formed the mountains, that men have been fish, that our globe is glass, and that it is the wreck of a comet. Others have discovered the primitive world, the primitive tongue, and the manner in which metals were formed in this primitive world. It is said that a Philosopher, very respectable, very judicious, very modest, and very liberal, had the secret of plaistering men over with rosin to prevent them from sickness; that he dissected giants to discover the nature of the soul, and that he foretold events. By such men, however, have we been imposed upon.

L E T T E R

T O

AN ACADEMICIAN, HIS FRIEND.

IF it is wished, that the people of Paris should not believe, that the young Count de Schovalo, chamberlain of the empress of Russia, and president of a cabinet of the legislature, is the author of the Epistle to Ninon, it is evidently the effect of modesty: for this epistle is that, which perhaps does the greatest honour to our nation. It is a matter truly surprising that, not having been, I believe, more than three months in Paris, he should have acquired so accurately what you call "the ton of good company;" that he should have gained it to perfection, and even added to it elegance and precision, so little known to certain of our French Seigneurs, who have not deigned to study grammar.

M. de

M. de Schovalo, composed some very elegant French verses, when he was with me some years ago; and we have had since that time, in various collections of miscellanies, several fugitive pieces of his which have great merit.

He deceived himself in saying that Châpelle

“A côté de Ninon fredonnait un refrain.”

By Ninon's side awaked the strain.

Châpelle, whom he has too much praised, was very far from trilling his notes by the side of Ninon.—This drunkard, who had many agreeable sallies, was her mortal enemy, and wrote several gross and ill-natured pieces against her. Behold one of them.

Il ne faut pas qu'on s'étonne,

Si par fois elle raisonne

De la sublime vertu,

Dont Platon fut revêtu.

Car à bien compter son âge,

Elle doit avoir . . . vécu

Avec le grand personnage.

It must not, e'en, our sense amaze,

If she the love sublime should praise,

That glow'd in Plato's breast.

For, if we reckon up her years,

She ought, and may for what appears,

Have *lived* with him at least.

This is not the stile of M. le Comte de Schovalo.—I write the name as we pronounce it—I cannot bring myself to write the W, for which I have always had the greatest aversion, as well as I have had for the word “François.”

I ad-

I admire the people who attribute this epistle to me. — They impute to me compliments, which are pardonable in the friendship of M. le Comte de Schovalo, but which would have been, assuredly, very ridiculous in my mouth.

I read by chance the Newspaper No. 25, the author of which pretends that I have concealed myself under the name of M. de Schovalo. He may say also, that I am concealed every day under the name of the king of Prussia, who composes not less wonderfully in our language; and under that of the empress of Russia, who writes, in prose, as well as her chamberlain does in verse. The insipid trifles with which the little Walloons overload us, are very unequal to the chef-d'œuvres of these foreigners. — It is, because these little Walloons have merely words in their heads, and those geniuses of the North think solidly.

I employ the W for the Walloons. We must be barbarous when we speak of them.

The same writers of news and nonsense, impute to me "A Letter of an Ecclesiastic on the Jesuits," and I know not what "white Bull." — I do assure you, that I never associate with the Jesuits. I am like the pope — I have abandoned them for ever, except father Adam, who is still with me. In regard to Bulls, either white or black, I confine myself to those, which I bring up in my stalls, and with which I labour. — For these sixty years past, I have felt very little disquiet, and have comforted myself in my cottage, practising *quid faciat letas segetes* — I have beside *letum animum*, in spite of the cabals that believe they afflict me, and whom I disregard as much as I would a puff of wind, &c.

This is not the title of M. le Comte de Schovalo — I write the name as we pronounce it — I cannot bring myself to write the W for which I have always had the greatest aversion, as well as I have had for the
SUN.

S U N D A Y,
O R
THE DAUGHTERS OF MINÆUS.

B. Y
M. DE. LA VISCLEDE, PERPETUAL SECRETARY to the
ACADEMY of MARSAILLES.

ADDRESSED TO
MADAME ARNANCHE.

DEAR madam, you desire to know,
If right I understand you ;
Why our devout, and pious clowns ;
Our cordeliers, with flowing gowns ;
And e'en our catechists do glow,
To guzzle upon Sunday.

To satisfy my dear Arnanche,
I've ask'd the bishop of Avranché,
And heard his sage remark.
Still, on the bible, is he thinking :
Noah, he says, the patriarch,
Sated, no doubt, with water drinking,
Got fuddled when he left the ark,

Huet is wrong, with this to rack us.
It was no other, Ma'am, than Bacchus,

The

The great lawgiver of the Ganges ;
Who having found the vineyard's treasures,
The week's last day did consecrate.
And by a great decree of state,
On this last day, he did engage us,
To drink and laugh, and take our pleasures.

Thus to his fire, the God imparts
Honours of the highest class ;
Ordaining us, the day to pass
Not in labour, toil, and arts,
But with our mistress, and our glass

One day, this worthy son of Jove
Descended from above,
And, to the sacred place, repair'd,
Where pious Semale conceived,
And Jove, into his thigh, the God receiv'd.
Great mystery to be revered !
And not, as lately we have seen,
Be treated with indignant spleen.

Bacchus scarce himself had shewn,
Mounted by Silenus' side ;
When the people press around,
And adore the God when known.
And, while they leave, untill'd, the ground,
They frisk, they caper, and they bound.
Nay, e'en their priests, and parsons hied,
And in the tavern still are found.

Amidst this frenzy, loud, and wild,
One citizen was seen :

MINÆUS,

MINÆUS, sober, meek, and mild,

A JANSENIST in mien.

His three sweet daughters, were reserv'd ;

Loved the Gods, their neighbours served ;

Spun the web ;—were early movers ;

Fled from pleasures, and from lovers ;

And, not a minute to mispend,

The church they never did attend.

ALCITHOE to her sisters says—

“ Work and finish the device,

“ The web of alms, and not of vice.

“ Does the curate, as he prays,

“ Give you a more sound advice ?

“ Spin, and let us leave the throng,

“ Like drunkards to awake the song.

“ Those who keep in their abodes,

“ Cannot well displease the Gods :

“ Spin, if you that fact believe ;

“ And, our labours to relieve,

“ Let each of us a story tell,

“ As we turn the spinning wheel.”

The sisters highly do approve,

And the feast of fancy love :

While she, who had proposed the plan,

In right of eldership began.

“ Labour's my God ;—'tis he alone hath sway :

He is the soul of all.—In vain, they say

The Gods a resting-place for sleep prepare :

I ask them, is't the Heav'ns, earth, sea, or air.

JOVE ends his circling course in ten short years,
 SATURN more tedious moves—more slow appears;
 But yet no stop, no pause the course attends,
 Which still begins the instant that it ends.

In his gay car, with gold and azure dight,
 APOLLO darts, in torrents, rays of light:
 Quitting the sky, in physic does he shine,
 An arch'tect, shepherd, minstrel and divine.
 Like him, his sister too her time improves,
 HECATE in Hell, DIANA in the groves,
 LUNA at night, and all the three she loves.

NEPTUNE six hours, in toil, each day is found;
 Raising the waters from the depths profound;
 And swelling, sinking, managing the waves.
 VULCAN begim'd still at his anvil slaves;
 And forges with his hands the bolts for JOVE,
 High does the first of Gods his toil approve,
 And gives him, for reward, the queen of love.

JUPITER still gratified his lustful fire;
 And well did VENUS imitate her fire,
 MARS pleas'd the wanton's luring craving eye,
 The most athletic coxcomb of the sky.
 With flushing cheek, high nose and manly port,
 While VULCAN daily laboured for the court,
 MARS did each minute with the queen improve,
 And pleas'd her vanity, as much as love.

The husband, now despised, and held in flight,
 To punish the invader of his right;

With

With threads of polish'd steel, as strong as fine,
 A net prepares, that no one can untwine.
 Softly, by night, he bore it to the bed,
 Where, in the arms of Mars, his wife was laid,
 And on the am'rous pair the cov'ring threw—
 Tho' lame and cripple, off with speed, he flew,
 And to the sun recounted the affair,
 "You who view all, he clamour'd, quick repair,
 "And see how closely I've entrapp'd the pair.
 "Before yet PHOSPHORUS in the east appears,
 "Or young AURORA sheds her dewy tears;
 "Call all the Gods to see how they are pent,
 "And to revenge my cause." APOLLO went;
 To all the Gods relates the sad disgrace,
 And, with a song, he charms them to the place.
 MARS quickly wakens, and awakes the fair;
 No sad confusion do their looks declare;
 The God clasps VENUS in his finewy arms,
 And triumphs in possession of her charms.
 The Gods in compliments to VULCAN join,
 And JOVE enjoys and laughs at the design:
 They highly praise the engine of his shame,
 And each one begs he'd catch them with the same."

When thus the sweet ALCITHOE

Her learning had display'd;

She to THEMIRA quickly said—

Without, they drink, delight in noise,

And sing in praise of EVOHE.

But you, whom reason still has led,

Have you no tale replete with joys.

Such is their rage, THEMIRA says,
 I fear the lawless rout;
 Let us therefore shut them out,
 And double-lock the door.
 Your charming tale my heart dismays;
 For, after yours, I justly doubt
 My story will be poor.

It is on VENUS' self again,
 A subject we can never drain,
 Whom boys and girls, whom young and old,
 With rev'rend awe, and love behold.
 On whom the school-boy makes, in pain,
 Without a spark of wit, the strain.
 (We are, by the bye, with these oppress'd;
 All meddling Authors I detest.
 They pass—they're suffer'd—and the saint
 Still pardons when her Poets paint.)

This Venus whom you, justly, tell
 Did love the God of war so well;
 Was quickly with another caught,
 With no small bliss the change was fraught.
 Near the Palestine she found,
 Sleeping on the rosy ground,
 A white-hair'd youth, with charming streaks
 O' the rose and lily in his cheeks—
 Whose brilliant eyes—whose graceful ease
 And tout-ensemble all did please,
 It was ADONIS, who, a place
 Did, with the Gods, but half possess.
 And yet the youth, they said who knew,
 His origin from Heaven drew;

Born

Born on incestuous desire,
 His uncle, Cinira's his Sire.
 Cinira too, believe or not,
 Was by a piece of bone begot—
 (I wish some Sage would take the pain,
 His genealogy t' explain;
 I love to learn, and 'tis a blessing,
 Not in religion to be missing.)

MARS with jealous, active eye,
 Soon surprized her with the boy.
 Glued was his nose upon her mouth,
 In am'rous play;—when lo, the youth,
 By MARS, was struck a deadly blow;
 And from the spear which pierced him thro',
 His blood in torrents quickly flows,
 And on the place, a flow'et grows.

Here, tho' I wish not to offend,
 I own I cannot comprehend,
 (With all this love, intrigue and pother,)
 How one God can kill another.
 What think you, my sisters, say,
 Is't not absurd a God to slay?—
 No, says Climene, we rely,
 Since he was born, he needs must die.
 His sudden exit gives me pain,
 But, onward to your tale again.

THEMIRA, loving reason's frays,
 Answers, I must more amaze,
 ADONIS' dies—but fruitful VENUS,
 Who peoples all, and doth ordain us;

VENUS who ev'ry bliss creates ;
 VENUS who recruits the States,
 After seven days were gone,
 Revives the God you seem to moan.

Good ! says CLIMENE—sweet amours !
 What a fancy, sister's, yours !
 Revive the dead ! a heap of lies !—
 So think I, the straight replies :
 And fancy we our duty, do,
 In thinking that the tale's untrue.
 But all these lies belief command,
 With the wise doctors of our land ;
 With Syria's rabbies the devout ;
 And with the wanton revel rout,
 That, on the banks of Nile, their days
 All spend in fingering Isis' praise.
 These, on ADONIS, gifts confer,
 While you, the lovely God inter.
 For six whole days, in hell to howl,
 He's damn'd in body, and in soul :
 On these six days they weep and wail,
 But on the seventh, joys prevail,
 Such is this allegoric plan ;
 Portrait of the life of man.
 Six days of pain for one of good ;
 For even sorrow ebbs at flood ;
 But small the portion is of joy,
 And oft our cup's without alloy.

Now, 'twas sage CLIMENE's turn.

But ah ! her talent sadly fails,
 For hist'ries, novels, and for tales,

For

For stories, gather'd from romance.
 For Truth's fair temple does she burn;
 Thither she struggles to advance,
 And having found the heavenly maid,
 With simple, but with sweet address,
 Leaving the ornaments of dress,
 A volume of remarks she made.

CLIMENE thus the pair address.
 Well, have you spent the tedious hours!
 The talents, mist'ries, and amours,
 The virtues of the Gods above—
 What they hate, and what they love,
 Stand, in your stories, full express'd.
 But I, who nothing know,
 Can nothing of the kind bestow.

Let this suffice.—
 Our fathers they have still deceived.
 Let not us also sacrifice
 Our reason, to these monst'rous lies,
 Nor be one tale, nor act believed.

Let the Beotians, stupid clods!
 Sing, in the tavern, to their Gods;
 And riot, in the wanton rites
 Of Bacchus, and his wild delights;
 Recounting all the strange events,
 Which they believe, and priest invents.
 Ought I to care for the divine,
 Who scolds me, when inflamed with wine?
 Let my bold spirit be displayed—
 I ne'er believed a word they said,

Throughout the earth they're arrant liars;
 Our brothers lie, as did our fires.
 Historians, physicians, priests,
 Do they not mock us with their jests?
 Let us repay them then in kind.—
 I don't believe the prophets blind :
 Who like a Python, puff and swell,
 And give up reason to foretel.
 I don't believe, with earthly mate,
 That e'er a God did procreate :
 I don't believe the giants war,
 I don't believe, in Phœbus' car,
 A coxcomb set the world on fire,
 And almost burnt th' immortal Sire.
 I don't believe i'the goal profound,
 To which, his rival, God hath bound.
 I don't believe the monst'rous tales
 Of Delphos' curious oracles.
 I don't believe——

Thus she proceeded, when—at once—
 A sudden panic seized her breast;
 Thunders do her tongue arrest;
 The house all shakes—the tempests roar—
 Frightful omens death announce—
 And throw the prattling sister's o'er,

With all the clergy round the God in state,
 Intoxicated Bacchus enters strait.

And I, says he, I do believe,
 That, grossly, you yourselves deceive;
 Fancying, my learned ladies,
 That doubt, and disbelief your trade is :

I do

I do believe your wit misleads,
 Your silly books have turn'd your heads :
 Thus to work while others play ;
 But soon the penalty you pay
 Of breaking the religious day.
 My vengeance sudden doom exacts,
 I change you instantly to bats.

He said, and, quick, the sisters fair

Diminish'd to the fight ;

Their tongues, for once, they cannot ply ;

Beneath their arms, rose wings of hair ;

And to the allies forth they fly,

Three mongrel birds of night.

This punishment was justly due

To their pretended science ;

And ought to warn the reas'ning crew,

Who set (all morals to subdue)

Religion at defiance.

We know, in life's uncertain season,

There's danger even in our reason.

OVID's Muse with this was caught,

And LA FONTAINE the story taught.

I too have strove to sing the strain,

Tho', after those, I know with pain,

I should do better to refrain.

L E T T E R

FROM

MONS. DE LA VISCLEDE,

TO

MONS. THE PERPETUAL SECRETARY OF THE
ACADEMY OF PAU.

SIR, and my dear Compatriot.

I SEND you my Daughters of Minæus; and I repeat to you in prose, what I have said in verse, that I ought not to have treated this subject after Ovid and la Fontaine. It is not among men as in the gospel. He that comes to present himself at the eleventh hour, is not so well received as those who labour from the morning.—Mark how it happened to la Motte—He was desirous of writing an Iliad—they laughed at him. He wrote some philosophic fables, dedicated to the regent of the kingdom, and he received two thousand crowns. All the world, however, say—they love the genuine la Fontaine better, to whom Louis XIV. gave nothing.

You know this child of nature, this la Fontaine, and his three daughters of Minæus, which the Abbé d'Oliver hath published in a collection of five volumes. But you do not know his Loves of Mars and Venus, which are only to be found in the edition of 1750.—I copy them for your perusal.

THE

The LOVES of MARS and VENUS.

GREAT Mars was shot, by Cupid's art,
With golden arrow thro' the heart.

After many a well-fought field,
He strove to make Cytheria yield;
Nor did he long the battle wield.

For soon as he his terms had stated,
So soon the fair capitulated.

In form he undertook th' affair;
Arranged the enterprize with care;
Used every art to gain the queen,
And threw aside his fiery mien;
His richest equipage display'd,
Which for tournaments was made:
When still he wore this fine array,
Th' eclat of which outshone the day.
Yet, without this he beat the giants,
But little did he know the science
Of setting Cupid at defiance.

But soon he carried off the Dame:
Perhaps by fighting out his flame;
Perhaps, by painting war, and arms;
Sieges, counter-scraps, alarms,
Which, tho' they're Hebrew to the ear,
The ladies yet delight to hear.

See! how the queen, within that maze,
Her beauties to the God displays!
How long—how frantic seems the kiss!
How mutual their extatic bliss?

Glory

Glory, 'tis true, has many charms ;

But MARS ne'er knew of such alarms

As those he felt in Venus' arms.

We toil in glory's dusty field

While LOVE delights the war to wield,

With sighs, with tears, with throes and starts,

The spoils of ravaged, wounded hearts.

SOL on the QUEEN too had design ;

And, flush'd with th' hope of charms divine,

Within his breast more fire was bred,

Than what we see around his head.

He was a God of mighty thew ;

The prince of poets, tho' a beau.

He utter'd rather too much doctrine,

And what is worse, was skill'd in med'cine.

We need not say, of love an audience,

Between a man of arms, and science,

Ends ever in the latter's pain,

The feather pleases, not the pen.

So 'twas here, and MARS was chose—

Phœbus displeased to VULCAN goes,

And does the whole intrigue disclose.

Nay, leads him to the very scene,

Where lay, in MARS' arms, the QUEEN,

Secreted in a neighb'ring grove,

With no companion by, but love,

Vulcan shew'd th' extremes of pain

(His pangs were such he could not feign.)

He stood immoveable—his breast

With racking passions was oppress,

And all were, in his eyes, exprest.

His hammer dropt from out his hand ;

He cannot speak ; he cannot stand ;

A ham-

A hammer in his head resounds,
And all his sense, and thought confounds,

Mark HIM, that led him to the place !
And brought on VENUS the disgrace,
Ought he not to hide his face ?
To VENUS' temple first he goes,
And to seduce the GODDESS glows,
An earthly mistress, giv'n to rove,
Dally'd, he knew, and play'd with love,
And of her Lovers made her sport ;—
That those who strove the fair to court ;
Did it with flatt'ring speeches, plays,
Pleasantries, devices, lays,
With sweet bon mots—with Jeux d'esprit,
And other trifles form'd for glee.
He therefore tuned his sacred Lyre,
And fancied she must needs expire.
VENUS however had not leisure,
To listen to his notes of pleasure.
Repulsed to his revenge he flies,
And gives, to this confusion, rise.

With all this bustle, all this pain,
What good does injur'd Vulcan gain ?
When fated for the time, with love,
To Rome the couple strait remove ;
A day in blandishment to waste,
And changes of delight to taste.

When Hymen, with his magic band,
Tied VULCAN's to his VENUS' hand ;
Made one a husband, one a wife,
We see the buddings soon of strife,

The GRACES weep, at Venus' feet ;
 For they, in dire revenge, were beat.
 VULCAN strives to keep away
 The Lovers that devotion pay ;
 But what dragons would, I pray,
 With such assailants dare to grapple,
 And guard from Gods, so sweet an apple.
 Cupid he blamed, and on the son
 Laid all the wanton mother's sin ;
 Threaten'd to send him to a jail,
 Nor was this all, but full of bile :
 To earth, to Heaven he appeals ;
 And what he ought to keep, reveals ;
 Even the King of Gods addrest,
 And opens to him all his breast :
 Adult'rous Jove, the wound to heal,
 Tells him, it is but ideal :
 That such complaint should not appear,
 Nor trouble one celestial's ear,
 The worst of ills to tell, the least to bear.

What then can hapless Vulcan do
 But by himself revenge pursue ?
 A curious net of steel he wrought ;
 The happy child of Momus thought ;
 With this he purposes to go,
 And trap at once the belle and beau.
 The anvil sounds ; the hammers clink,
 And link is aptly joined to link ;
 A spectacle for the Gods to make,
 And napping, two o'themselves to take.

The shadowy sisters dress the bow'r,
 The Lovers seize the dark'ning hour ;

But

But soon they're caught in the offence ;

Nor can they fly in their defence.

VULCAN, to enjoy his spleen,

Limps off directly from the scene ;

And summonses the Gods to meet

The pair, with compliments, to greet,

And laugh at the uncommon treat. }

Ask you, who best enjoy'd the snare ?

I think 'twas the gallant and fair.

PERHAPS you may say that the Loves of Mars and Venus are not equal to the Fable of the Two Pigeons.—I shall certainly agree with you, as readily as I do when you say that his Ode to the King, for the unfortunate Fouquet, did not approach near to his Elegy to the Nymphs of Vaux on the same Fouquet.

“ Pleurez, nymphes de Vaux, dans vos grottes profondes.”

Weep, Nymphs of Vaux, within your grottos drear.

“ La cabale est contente, Oronte est malheureux.”

The cabal is content, Oronte is unhappy.

He changed the word cabal, when he perceived that the great Colbert served his king and his country with severe justice, and was no caballer. But la Fontaine intended to say so, and he believed justly that it was the proper word. You tell me that *John* did very wrong in publishing his Opera, and the Comedy intitled “ Je vous prends sans verd,” I take you unprovided: and the Comedy of *Climene*, &c.—But the Abbé d'Olivét did much more injury then, in making a collection of all that could

could diminish the glory of la Fontaine.—The passion of editors resembles that of Sacristains—they collect all the tatters and scraps of antiquity, and hope they will be revered.—But as we judge not of true saints but by their good actions, so do we not decide on men of genius but by their good works.

Seventy theatrical pieces all unworthy of the author of Cinna, could not ravish from him the name of Great. All that we reprehend in Quinault, does not prevent us from confessing, that he stands alone and inimitable in the very difficult species of the drama he pursued. Sixty of the ancient fables modernised by la Fontaine, and told with an allurements, which was never known but by Petronius, and never executed but by our fabulist—and twenty of the tales written with this charming facility, this happy negligence that we admire in him, place him infinitely above Boccace, and sometimes even, if I may dare to say so, by the side of Ariosto, for his manner of writing.

He possessed the great endowment of Nature, taste. The most exalted genius would not have been able to have overtaken him in the road he assumed. It is by taste, that the Age of Louis XIV. will be distinguished to the latest of all ages, in our France, at least, which was so long unpolished. There will always be genius; the knowledge of men will increase—they will discover useful works—but taste, I doubt our country has already produced its share of. I am afraid we shall never recover the author of Cinna; that of Iphigenia; of Athalia; of Phedre; that of the Art of Poetry; that of Roland and Armide; or him, who, in the pulpit, forced even Ministers to weep, and admire the daughter of Henry IV. wife to Charles I. and her daughter Henrietta.

See how the funeral orations of the present day are buried with those whom they celebrate. See, how Sethos, notwithstanding its many good passages, and the travels of Cyrus, are sinking into oblivion; while Telemachus is still the instruction and the delight of every youth of education. How comes it to pass, that,
in

in the crowd of our preachers, there is not even one who approaches near to the author of the *Carnival*? You see, with regret, that no one dares attempt, singly, to imitate the author of *Tartuffe*, and the *Misanthrope*. We have several comedies very agreeable—yet we have but one Moliere, and I may venture to foretel, that we shall never have another.—What glory for la Fontaine, to be placed beside all these great men!

The Abbé de Chaulieu closed the age with three or four pieces of poetry, which either came from the heart, or appeared to do so.—They breathe voluptuousness and philosophy, and demand favour for all the insipid bagatelles with which they have stuffed his collection.

It astonishes me that la Fontaine has not spoken of Chaulieu, but in regard to a sum of money which he was to receive, by his hands, from the Duke de Vendôme.

How could the Abbé d'Olivat print the three pieces of la Fontaine, written in so miserable a stile, in which he demands alms for having girls? I do not recollect that he ever said,

J'ai quelquefois aimé; je n'aurais point alors

Contre le Louvre et ses trésors,

Contre le firmament, et la voûte céleste.

Changé les bois, changé les lieux,

Honorés par les pas, éclairés par les yeux

De l'aimable, et jeune Bergère,

Par qui, sous le fils de Cithère,

Je servis engagé par mes premiers sermens.

Helas! quand reviendront de semblables momens,

Faut-il que tant d'objets si doux et si charmans.

Me laissent vivre au gré de mon ame inquiète?

Ne sentirai-je plus de charme qui m'arrête?

Ai-je passé le tems d'aimer?

I once did love, alack the day !
 And every thing around, was gay,
 I lik'd the Louvre and its treasures ;
 And took delight in Nature's measures.
 Chang'd was the prospect of the groves,
 When with the nymph tripp'd laughing loves ;
 Chang'd were the features of the skies,
 Embellish'd by *her* lovely eyes.
 With whom, by Cupid's aid, I prov'd
 How strenuous, and fierce I lov'd.
 When will the time, alas, return,
 When I, with equal flames, shall burn ?
 Must so many charming fair
 Force me to live in spite of care ?
 The charms that court me can't I prove ?
 Am I then past the date of love ?

We would believe these two latter verses to be the production of a man of accomplishments, and youthful passions—of a duke de Candale—of a duke de Bellegarde. This does not agree with the Jannetons of John la Fontaine, who demand some pistoles of the duke of Vendôme, and the voluptuous Chaulieu, for softening in his favour the heroines of the Pont-neuf.

All this, Sir, does not prevent a considerable number of his fables, full of sentiment, ingenuity, art and eloquence, from possessing every charm that can please.

When I say that he is almost equal to the great men of his memorable age, I say nothing extravagant. I should, indeed, be a ridiculous exaggerator, if I dared to compare “ Master Raven perched upon a tree, holding a piece of cheese in his mouth,” and “ the Grasshopper having sung all the summer, &c.”—to this verse of Cornelia who holds the urn of her husband,

“ Eternal

“ Eternel entretien de haine et de pitié
 “ Restes du grand Pompée, écoutez sa moitié.

Eternal source of hatred and of pity !
 All that remains of Pompey !—Listen
 To his wife !

And to those of Cæsar.

“ Restes d'un demi-dieu dont à peine je puis
 “ Egaler le grand nom, tout vainqueur que j'en suis !

The remains of a demi-god, whose name
 I scarce can equal, though I conquer'd him.

“ The Cobbler and the Financier”—“ The Animals afflicted with the Plague”—“ The Fool and his Son, &c.” all excellent in their kind, as they are, cannot be placed in the same rank with the scene of the Horatii and the Curiatii, or with the inimitable pieces of Racine, or with the perfect Art of Poetry of Boileau ; or with the Misanthrope and the Tartuffe of Moliere. The extreme merit of surmounting difficulty—a great plan conceived with genius, and executed with that taste which in Racine is never strained nor put to difficulty—Perfection in fine, in any great art, is much superior to the art of telling a tale—I do not wish to compare the flight of the linnet to that of the eagle. I confine myself merely to call to your remembrance, that la Fontaine hath often succeeded in his humble species as much as Corneille did in his. I would only wish, for the glory of my country, that they had not published the latter fables of the one, nor the latter tragedies of the other, after Partharites. But these cursed editors publish all—These are the ravenous crows that feed upon and outrage the dead, as envy does the living. At the same time if they only pestered the public with the bad works of good authors, we could pardon it to their regard for the memories of the authors ; but what is much worse, they too frequently add their own absurdities, which they attempt to pass under the name of

writers little known. I have suffered myself, unknown as I am, from this rage of publishing.—How many insignificant pieces have they not published under the name of la Visclède, in their huge collections! Verses of Bonneval on the death of Mademoiselle le Couvreur—Verses to my dear B—— on Newton.—Impertinent stanzas to Madame du Chatelet—a letter of Varsovie—an Epistle of Formont to the Abbé de Rotelin—an Ode on the true deity—Letter of Mr. de la Visclède to his friends of Parnassus, &c. &c.

Those who form to themselves libraries are continually cheated by this practice, which buries the true grain beneath a mass of tares. We are disgusted with reading by the multiplication of books and pamphlets. If it is true that the Ptolemies at one time possessed a library of four hundred thousand volumes, he did not do ill who burnt it; and if the world will agree to burn all the books that now overwhelm us, I will begin the conflagration with my own.

We are infested in our age, with a crowd of little artists who dissect the age that is past.—They created then, and they cull now—they criticise the creation. I fall into this fault in writing to you, but I open my heart to a friend, and I should be very much hurt if my letter became public.

Permit me to remark that we ought not to be severe on la Fontaine, because he appears to pretend to no merit—The less that he arrogated, the more he received—They overlooked his bad fables in favour of his excellent ones—It was not so with Racine and Boileau who pretended to perfection, and with whom the critics quarreled for a word. It is thus that they forgive every thing in Montagne, and thus that they fell rudely upon Balzac, who wished to be thought always correct, and always elegant.

After that la Bruiere, in his characters, had given us strictures on Corneille and Racine, how many writers piqued themselves for having judged in the same manner; and in fine they have made more than an hundred volumes on the age of Louis XIV. Every writer, in his

his strictures, be they in verse or prose, has studied, and seemed more anxious to display his genius than to discover the truth, and to make antitheses rather than arguments.

There is an inundation of journalists and reviewers, in which the good is overwhelmed with the bad, and all erudition is destroyed in presenting extracts to ignorance. The readers decide like the magistrates who judge on the report of their secretaries.

It is even become worse than this—They are divided into factions—the Jansenists assert that the Jesuits never produced one valuable work, and that the father Bouhours knew not the language. The Jesuits have denied Boileau any merit, because he was the friend of Renaud—The reviewers profess injustice. It is the battle of the cats and the frogs after the Iliad.

To prove to you, Sir, with what precipitation they judge, and how a single bon mot takes place of their reason, I will only quote to you this decision of la Bruiere, which hath given rise to a variety of dissertations, “ Racine hath painted men such as they are, and Corneille such as they ought to be.” This is specious, but it is altogether false. Cæsar never ought to have been so silly, and so much of the coxcomb, as to say to Cleopatra, that he would not have conquered at Pharsalia but to please her, her whom he had never seen before, and who was but a child of fifteen years. The other Cleopatra never ought to have poisoned one of her infants, and assassinated the other at the end of an alley in the garden. Theodore ought not to have persisted in prostituting himself in a common stew, in place of accepting the succour and assistance of an honest man. Polyuctes ought not to have demolished the ornaments of a temple, and break his followers heads for the sake of devotion. Leontine ought not to have boasted of being able to do all things, while with all he did nothing. Ought Pompey to have divorced the wife he loved, to marry the niece of a tyrant? Ought Partharites to have yielded up his? Ought

Theseus in the play of Oedipus to have spoke of love in the midst of a plague, and to have said,

“ Quelque ravage affreux qu'étaie ici la peste,
 “ L'absence aux vrais amans est encor plus funeste ?

What frightful havock's equal to the plague ?
 And yet to lovers absence is as bad.

If the judicious and energetic La Bruière is so evidently deceived, what will become of our little scholars who determine with so much assurance, and who, more ignorant and more impudent even than a Freron, dare to decide, on the first glance of the eye, upon works that a Quintilian would have examined with the greatest attention before he had, modestly, given his opinion.

You ask me, Sir, a very important question—You ask me why Louis XIV. did not shower his favours upon La Fontaine in common with the other men of letters who did honour to that great age ? I answer you, in few words, that he did not enough relish the species of poetry in which this charming fabulist excelled. He treated the fables of La Fontaine as he did the pictures of Teniers, not one of which he would admit into his apartments. He did not love the *little* of any kind, although he had as much delicacy as grandeur in his taste. He did not relish the light verses of Benferede, although they had relation to the magnificent feasts that he himself gave.

Besides—La Fontaine was of a character not at all qualified for the court of this monarch—His continual distractions, and his extreme simplicity, though they rejoiced his friends, yet were not fitted to please such a man as Louis XIV.

La Bruière hath used colours rather too severe in painting our fabulist, but yet there is truth in the portrait. “ He appears clownish, heavy, and stupid—He “ knows not either how to speak of, or to relate what “ he happens to see before him, but if he sets him-
 self

“ self down to write, he is the model of good tale-writers,” &c.

La Bruière, who painted all his cotemporaries, hath said as much of Corneille, not that Corneille was a good tale-writer—His talents was different—He has been very often truly sublime in his good pieces. Boileau did not perhaps enough study the case of La Fontaine and Corneille—He was not sensible that in a stile always pure, he could only admire the perfect.

Be assured, Sir, it is altogether false that La Fontaine displeased the King, as it is said, by having written in favour of the superintendant Fouquet. Pellisson the bold defender of this minister, and who had even been his victim, became one of the favourites of Louis XIV. and made a great fortune. His affecting eloquence, his useful erudition, his knowledge of business, and his pliant temper, made him a statesman. La Fontaine had nothing of all this. Altogether bounded in his genius, and incapable even of exerting it to a valuable account, it is not astonishing that he was not much remarked by Louis XIV.

Lulli hurt him very much—You know that all is cavil among men of letters as well as among priests—The cabal against Quinault, one of the great ornaments of this memorable age, having forced Lulli to have recourse to others for his operas, he made choice of La Fontaine. We confess that the fabulist, having made his heroes speak in the stile of Jeanot Lapin and of Mad. Belette, could not succeed after Atis and Theseus. Lulli was full of genius and taste—The more that he had of these qualities, the more impossible it was for him to make any music of such words. He was none of those people who say it is an indifferent matter to compose either the Gazette or Armida, that both are equal in point of fitness, and that there is nothing in the world so necessary as semi-quavers. Poor Fontaine, seriously believing that he did him great injustice, wrote the satire of the Florentine against Lulli—It is not in the taste either of Boileau or Horace.

" Le B—— avait juré de m'amuser six mois
 " Il fa trompa de deux. Mes amis de leur grace,
 " Me les ont epargnés, l'envoyant, ou je croi
 " Qu'il va bien sans eux et sans moi.
 " Voila l'histoire en gros. Le detail a des suites
 " Qui valent bien d'être déduites,
 " Et j'en aurais pour tout un an."

For full six months, tho' more by two,
 B—— swore to entertain me;
 Thinking much pleasure would ensue,
 My friends would not detain me.

The Consequences and detail
 Are such—I ought to state 'em;
 But it would take—so long the tale—
 A twelvemonth to relate 'em.

No, by no means, is this detail, and these consequences worth the relating, especially in such bad verse—The worst is that he excuses himself, for this ridiculous satire, to Mad. de Thiange, sister of Mad. de Montespan, in verse not less ridiculous—He believes that Lulli robbed him of fortune and fame, in not making music to his words. See how he explains himself.

" Le ciel m'a fait auteur, je m'excuse par-là.
 " Auteur qui pour tout fruit moissonne,
 " Un peu de gloire, on le lui ravira;
 " Et vous croyez qu'il s'en taira!
 " Il n'est donc plus auteur. La consequence est bonne.

I'm a poet by nature—I am not to blame—
 A Poet whose fortune consisted of fame;
 'They robbed me of that—to complain I forbore,
 But the consequence is, I'm a poet no more.

I am persuaded that the coachman of Vertamont could have made such verse as well as Fontaine—I know well that these miserable prosaics in rhyme are no other than easy fooleries—But in short, the same man is the best workman on the ancient fables of Æsop and

and Pilpay, and the man, who, in this species of writing, in warmth of genius, exceeds all others. This peculiar talent gained him an excuse for every thing; even Lulli forgave him, and very pleasantly said, that he liked better to set the satire of Fontaine to music than the operas.

It appears to me, that the public voice prefer his fables to his tales.—These for the most part appear to good critics, to be rather too long. They do not love this verse in the “*Joconde*,” taken from Ariosto,

“ Prenons, dit le Romain, la fille de notre hôte ;

“ Je la tiens pucelle sans faute,

“ Et si pucelle qu’il n’est rien

“ De si puceau que cette fille.”

They disapprove of this mode of expression, this taste of the Rue de St. Denis—this vulgar taste to which Ariosto was never subject. The “*Greco*” and the “*Fiametta*” of Ariosto, are much superior to the Maid of la Fontaine.

They do not love what our fabulist says in “*The beaten and contented cuckold* ;”

“ Tant se la mit le drôle en sa cervelle,

“ Que dans sa peau peu ni point ne durait.”

Bocace never had these low and incorrect expressions.

We cannot bear, in the “*Servante justifiée*” a tale of the queen of Navarre, the imitator to express himself thus :

“ Bocace n’est le seul qui me fournit,

“ Je vais par fois en un autre boutique.

“ Il est bien vrai que ce divin esprit

“ Plus que pas un me donne de pratique.

“ Mais comme il faut manger de plus d’un pain,

“ Je puise encor en un vieux magasin.”

They consider these expressions, “*Aller dans une autre boutique, donner de pratique, manger de plus d’un*

“ d’un pain,” as made for the populace rather than for gentlemen, and this is the great fault of la Fontaine.

The *ring of Hans-Carvel*, which has been copied by Rabelais, is much superior in Ariosto; there is at least one good reason in Ariosto why the devil appears a good man,

“ Fu già un pittor, non mi ricordo il nome,
 “ Che de pinger, il Diavol’ solea,
 “ Con bel viso, begli occhi, e belle piume, &c.”

The amazing superiority of Ariosto over his imitator, appears in this little tale, as much as it does in the invention of his Orlando—in his inexhaustible imagination, in his sublime and in his native elegance.

The Cordeliers of Catalogne—Richard Minutolo—The Wager of the three Gossips never pleased men of delicate taste. You do not find in Fontaine any tale that speaks to the heart except *the Falcon*; any, from which you can draw an useful moral; any, where there has been on his part the smallest invention.—They are no more in general than old tales renewed. They are composed of wives who deceive their husbands, or of youths who decoy their mistresses. You can scarcely, in short, find one tale written with continued elegance.

The tales have charmed the young, more by the gaiety of their subjects, than by the grace and the correctness of their stile.—I have seen many men of genius and taste who would not allow that la Fontaine had spoiled “ The enchanted Cup” of ARIOSTO by such verse as the following :

“ L’argent fut donc flechir ce cœur inexorable,
 “ Le rocher disparut, un mouton succéda,
 “ Un mouton qui s’accommoda
 “ A tout ce qu’on voulut, mouton doux et traitable,
 “ Mouton qui sur le point de ne rien refuser,
 “ Donna pour arrhes un baiser.”

He must in truth have very little taste, who approves of the rock that is turned into a sheep, who accommodates

commodates itself, and who gives earnest. The tales, and the two last books of fables, are too full of these figures, so incoherent and so false, that they appear rather to be the fruit of painful research, than of that agreeable negligence which is so much praised in our author.

I have seen many readers that revolt against the style which is called the *marotic*.—They say that he did not speak the language of the days of Louis XIV. but that of Louis XII. and Francis I.—that if they were to give us the comedy of the Advocate Patelin, such as they performed it on the trestles in the court of Charles VII. no one could endure it. Happily la Fontaine is a little blamed for this fault, so that others after him, will chuse to write agreeable to the fashion of the times in which they live.

But that which in my opinion is most worthy of remark, is, that of all the ancient novels which la Fontaine hath put into easy verse, there is not one even which breathes the spirit of lasciviousness. His pictures are more gay than dangerous—They make not that voluptuous and unhappy impression, which produces so many Italian books, and above all our Aloisia Toletana. This is so certain, that they have brought two of his old tales upon the stage, with the approbation of the magistrates, without any danger; without any matron having complained of the indecency; and without any inconvenience whatever. They saw plainly that the severe Boileau had reason on his side when he said

“ L’amour le moins honnête exprimé chastement,
“ N’excite point en nous de honteux mouvement.”

Love the least pure, if purely ’tis express’d,
Excites no lawless passion in the breast.

It is for this reason that I have always been astonished at the enthusiastic severity with which the young orator Poujet dared to speak to the old la Fontaine, and at the monkish vanity with which he has published his pretended

pretended triumph over the innocence of this old man: It was ridiculous enough that an insignificant priest of twenty-five years of age, strove to bring to trial an Academician of seventy-two—but why shew to the eyes of the public the trophies of this so easy conquest? It was his pride that boasted to have trodden beneath his feet innocence and simplicity.—And who, I wonder, advised the Abbé d'Olivet, philosopher as he is, to reprint this letter of Poujet.—This letter is a solemn disclosure of the good la Fontaine's confession. For to acquaint the world with all the circumstances, all the measures, all the questions and all the answers, is it not directly to betray the inviolable secret of his confession?

That which hurts me most in the insolence of Poujet is, the affectation of repeating twenty times to la Fontaine, "Your infamous book, Sir;"—"The scandal of your infamous book, Sir;"—"The sins, Sir, of which your infamous book has been the cause; the public reparation that you ought to give, Sir, for your infamous book."

Ought he to have dared to speak so to a queen of Navarre, sister to Francis I. from whom many of these pleasant and not infamous tales were drawn?—He would have requested from her a benefice. Ought he even to have dared to give the name of infamous to Bocace, the father of the Italian language; and to Ariosto who has no other title in his own country than that of the divine?

The adventure of Poujet with the good and worthy la Fontaine is, in fact, that of the ass in the admirable fable of "The animals afflicted with the plague."

"L'âne vint à son tour, et dit j'ai souvenance

"Qu'en un pré de moines passant

"La faim, l'occasion, l'herbe tendre; et je pense

"Quelque diable aussi me poussant

"Je fondis de ce pré la largeur de ma langue

"Je n'en avais nul droit, puisqu'il faut parler net,

"A ces mots on cria, haro sur le baudet.

"Poujet quelque peu clerc prouva par sa harangue,

"Qu'il fallait dévouer ce maudit animal, &c."

The

The afs appeared next, and he fairly confest,
 That in passing, one day, the field of a priest,
 He was tempted by hunger, th' occasion, the grass,
 And the devil too pushing him on to trespass;
 To pluck up as much as the breadth of his tongue,
 For tho' gifted with speech, he was still in the wrong.
 At these words the whole herd raised a hue and a cry,
 And Poujet gave proof in the turn of an eye,
 That the crime was so heinous, the jackals must die.

And it is very curious, that Fontaine, who was exactly of the colour of an afs, was also so foolish with all his genius, as to give credit to the self-sufficient Poujet who did himself too much honour by intimidating the worthy author, and who spoke to the translator of Ariosto and of the queen of Navarre as he would have spoke to a profligate.

I would have advised Fontaine to have made a tale on Poujet, more pleasant than his Florentine upon Lulli.

After the impertinence of Poujet, I know of nothing more arrogant than the insolent preface to the edition of la Fontaine's tales in 1743, under the title of, "The London Edition." The editor who gives himself out to be a Jansenist (I know not for what) says, that la Fontaine had assurance enough to write other pieces than fables and tales in verse, and he quotes upon this Madame de Savigné.

Yes, Mr. editor, he had assurance enough to produce other works, although it must be owned the greatest part of them are not very valuable. But why, Mr. editor, will you be pleased to say, is it that a poet who hath written tragedies, ought never to write upon history and physic?—Tell me, Mr. editor, from whence you have taken this arret?—If you do not understand history and physic, in God's name do not write on them.—It is certain we have too many worthless publications on those subjects already: but it is permitted to men of skill, in the professions, to speak of them. Know that a good tragedian is very likely to be a good historian, because there must be in all history, an exposition, a plot, a winding up, and an interest! Know that

that he who paints human nature, in a theatrical piece, paints it so much the more finely at the same time, in history. Know, Mr. editor, of the tales of la Fontaine, that phyfic gives no plea for negligence. Know that Moliere translated Lucretius; and know that it would be unworthy of a man of genius to write nothing but tales.

Pardon, Sir, this trifling digression against this trifling editor—and pardon me above all for having sent you my daughters of Minæus.

E P I S T L E

FROM

M. DE LA CONDAMINE.

TO

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

WHILE Sir, your rapid, ready pen,

In one small volume, can contain

The life of Louis the great;

My voyage to Quito, will demand,

So slow and prolix is my hand,

A quarto one to treat.

A son of Bennet would require,

For so ungenial is their fire,

A folio at the least.

While, guided by his Clio's skill,

Voltaire would but a pamphlet fill,

And tell the story best.

Well

Well might I offer up my praise,
 If judging of a Poet's lays,
 They measur'd by the bulk,
 Then would I climb Parnassus fair,
 With Benedictine, or Voltaire,
 And not in crannies sculk.

In sending you my voyage, Sir, I am careful not to pray you to undertake the perusal of it, in preference to pieces of more value. I am too sensible, that you would lose your time, and if I could believe that you would look into it, I would say to you.

The moments fly quick, when the day you so fill;
 Then read not my volume, but write to me still.
 Alone should Voltaire pay his court to the Muse,
 While we, day and night, should his labours peruse;
 When his lyre's unstrung, he with Fred'ric retires,
 And, beyond this, the world each moment requires.

A N S W E R
 O F
 M. D E V O L T A I R E.

GOD'S-MERCY! Monsieur Condamine!

Who hath so well described the line,
 And, to your letter, so refin'd,
 Your learning with your wit hath join'd!
 Well! after viewing every coast,
 All your toil, and labour's lost.—
 Wish you to make a fortune soon?
 Make but a journey to the moon.

And

And there you'll find as people say,
 All that flies from earth away;
 Friend's promises, however kind;
 The praises of the most refin'd,
 And all the blifs of human kind.

T O T H E
 K I N G O F P R U S S I A.

Hague, 17th October, 1745.

S OON you shall have, at Berlin's court,
 This theatrical cohort,
 A hoggish, haughty venal race;
 Heroes of party-colour'd face;
 Who, with lac'd cloaths, will oft be seen in,
 Jewels false, and dirty linen,
 Who'll clamour for the Roman state;
 And call th' inhuman hero great;
 Drawing the world, for partial gain,
 Three times a week, to sit in pain.
 Actresses you'll have so flattern.
 One half woman, one half patten:
 Those coquettes, and strumpets these;
 Who'll practice every art to please,
 Whom Crispin, or the prompter's boy
 In holes and corners, will enjoy.

God be praised! that your majesty hath taken the
 resolution to give yourself quiet and peace—It is the
 only advice that I have presumed to give you, but I
 defy

defy all the politicians in the world to propose to you a better.

There are daily coming to this place numbers of young French officers—when we ask them the intention of their journey, they say they are going in search of employment in Prussia. There are four actually of my acquaintance. One is son to the Governor of Berg-Saint-Vinox—another is son to the major of the regiment of Luxembourg—the third is son to a president, and the fourth is the natural son of a bishop—The last has run away with a young lady—another has run away by himself—another has married the daughter of his taylor, and the fourth chose to be a player rather than to have a regiment.

I hear a piece of news that charms my tolerating spirit. Your Majesty has permitted the poor Anabaptists to return, who had been driven away, I know not for what :

Twice they may themselves baptize,

If, by once, they're unbaptised ;

The stole doth either John exorcise,

Or, by which, John's exorcised.

Whether without, or in the pale ;

By me no harm is understood ;

And Mussulmen I do not fail

To cherish, when I find them good.

Let in our minds the laws have place,

Let each man love his king, and wife ;

And as to what's called faith, and grace,

They may secure eternal life.

TO THE SAME.

15th April, 1758.

SINCE you so great a master are,
 Both in the arts of verse, and war;
 And that you love them both so well—
 Now compose, now mankind kill;
 Instruct at once, and ravage states.—
 Your friend loves verse, but slaughter hates;
 Yet dares not strive t' oppose, with ire,
 Your warlike, military fire.
 Each genius to it's proper end,
 'Tis mine, myself to recommend,
 To mark how justly you do seize
 The art to kill,—the art to please.

At the same time be pleased to call to your recollection that which I have often said,

Though I admire young Ammon, and Alcides,
 The virtues I prefer of Aristides.

This Aristides was a good man. He did not propose enriching an archbishop of Mayence, at the expence, and with the bounties of any ruined village of Greece. It is clear that your majesty hath incurred the censure of Rome, for imagining so pleasantly, to pay the church with the pots that you had broken.—In order to relieve yourself from the greater excommunication, I would advise you, as a good citizen, to pay yourself. I remember your majesty hath often told me that the people of *** were fools.—In truth, Sire, you are very good, to wish to reign over such subjects. I am of
 opinion

opinion they propos'd to you a very good bargain in praying you to give them all they wanted.

I fancy that a hero great,
Who laughs at, while he builds a state,
Wishes o'er men of sense to reign ;—
At Rome then be the hero seen.

As I was so very much vexed at paying three twentieths of my fortune, and at ruining myself, to have the honour of assisting you in the war, you believe, perhaps, that it was avarice that induced me to advise you to peace. By no means. It was merely, that you might not, day after day, run the hazard of being slain by Croatsians, Huffars, and other Barbarians, who know not what good poetry is.

Your ministers, without doubt, have at Breda much better views, than I have. The duke of Choiseul, M. de Caunitz, and Mr. Pitt, never let me into their secret. They say it is not known but to a M. de St. Germaine, who supped, in the village of Trente, with the fathers of the Council, and who will probably have the honour of seeing your Majesty, in about fifty years. He is a man who never improves, and who knows every thing. For my part, who am so ready to finish my career, and who know nothing, I confine myself to the hope that you know the duke of Choiseul.

Your Majesty tells me that you are about to become an idle rascal. An excellent piece of news truly ! and what then will become of the other lords of earth ? I have seen you frequently admire the idle rascals Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and Julian. Resemble them for ever, but do not, in your merry moods, burn me along with the duke of Choiseul.

And on this I present to your Majesty my respect, and devoutly pray the Divinity to give peace to his images on earth.

T O T H E S A M E.

On a BUST in PORCELAIN, made at BERLIN, representing the AUTHOR, and sent to him by his MAJESTY, in January 1775.

EPICTETUS, ere from life relieved,
From great Aurelius, this bequest received;
He cried, "My fortune is by far too high,
"For him alone I'd live—his friend I die."

Together we've pursued the same fine arts;
The same philosophy hath warm'd our hearts.
I, subject—he, monarch, Mars's fav'rite son,
And ne'er hath envy's darts our peace undone.

More did he give than from a king's required;
While I with beggar'd poets still was tired.
Foes he had some, but he dispelled the crew;
And all the crowd of mine, his hand o'erthrew.

Pursued by bigots in my lone retreat,
Now are the bigots prostrate at his feet;
He from his throne—I from my cell profound,
Preach toleration to the world around.

The God of nature we adore the same;
For one there only is, whate'er his name;
But we're not fools enough to join the rest,
His worship to dishonour with contest.

Up to the sphere celestial both do go;
I move most quickly on, but he is slow;
He will with Homer, and Achilles stand,
While I, a footstool, at their feet, demand.

ON THE WORD "IMMORTALI,"

Which the King of Prussia had engraved on the base
of the Bust

A sage—a hero 'tis whose sov'reign hand,
To me, gives immortality.
Moulds me of earth from out his native land—
—Immortal is its quality.

ADVENTURE OF MEMORY.

THE thinking part of mankind, that is to say, the hundred thousandth part of mankind, at the most, have believed for a long time, or at least have often repeated that the origin of our ideas is in the senses, and that the Memory is the only instrument by which we can join two ideas, and two words together.

It is for this reason that Jupiter, representing nature, became enamoured of Mnemosine, the Goddess of Memory, on the first instant that he beheld her, and from this marriage were born the nine Muses—the inventresses of all the arts.

This dogma, on which was founded all our knowledge, was universally received, and even the Sorbonne embraced the doctrine, and believed that from the senses and memory were derived whatever was true.

Some time after this came a casuist, half geometrician, and half chimerist, who argued against the five senses, and against the Memory; and he said to the few think-

ing people—"You are deceived, for your senses are
 "useless; ideas are innate, and you possess them before
 "any of your senses can act—you have all necessary
 "notions on your first coming into the world. You
 "know all without having thought of any thing.—All
 "your ideas, born with you, were present to your in-
 "telligent spirit, the soul, without the aid of the Me-
 "mory. Memory is good for nothing."

The Sorbonne condemned this proposition, not because it was ridiculous, but because it was new: in the mean time, an Englishman set himself to prove, and that too seriously, that we had no innate ideas: that nothing was more necessary than the five senses; and that the Memory was most useful for the purpose of retaining the ideas received from the five senses, then the college condemned these sentiments, because they had been adopted by an Englishman. In consequence of this, she ordained, that mankind should believe, from henceforth, in innate ideas, and pay no more credit to the five senses, or to Memory. Mankind, in place of obeying, laughed at the Sorbonne, which so enraged her, that she wished to have burned a philosopher. For this philosopher had said, that it was impossible to have one compleat idea of a cheese without having seen it, and eaten it; and the profligate even dared to advance, that men and women would not have been able to have worked in tapestry, if they had not had needles, or if they had been without fingers to thread them.

The Jesuits joined themselves to the Sorbonne for the first time, in their lives; and the Jansenists, mortal enemies of the Jesuits, reunited themselves, for a moment, with them. They called to their assistance, the ancient Dicaftericians, who were great philosophers, and altogether they proscribed Memory, and the five senses, with the author who had spoken well of these six things.

A horse was present at the judgment, which those gentlemen pronounced, although he was not of the same species, and that there were between him and them many matters of difference, such as the tail, and the voice,

voice, though there was an equality in the hair and the ears. This horse, I say, who had sense, as well as the senses, spoke of the affair one day to Pegasus in my stable, and Pegasus went to relate the story, with his usual pleasantry, to the Muses.

The Muses who, for a hundred years, had singularly favoured the country, (which had been a long time barbarous) where this scene had passed, considered themselves exceedingly scandalized. They loved tenderly Memory, or Mnemosyne, their mother, to whom these nine sisters were indebted for all that they knew. The ingratitude of men provoked them. They never had written any satire against the antient Dicaftericians, the Jesuits, the Jansenists, and the Sorbonne, because satires do not correct any person, but irritate fools, and render them more wicked.—They imagined a method of enlightening them by punishment. Men had blasphemed the Memory; the Muses therefore denied them this gift of the Gods, to the end that they might learn what they were without its precious assistance.

It happened, then, that in the midst of a very fine night, the brains of men became dull and stupid, in such a manner, that when morning slowly approached, all the world awaked without having the smallest remembrance of the past. Some Dicaftericians, in bed with their wives, wished to approach them, by a remnant of instinct, independent of the Memory. The women, who had but very rarely an impression of sympathy towards their husbands, rejected their disgusting caresses with vigour.—The husbands flew into a passion—the wives screamed, and almost every family went to cuffs.

The gentlemen, finding a four-cornered cap, made use of it for certain occasions, which neither the Memory nor good sense would have permitted—the ladies made use of their toilet pots for the same uses. The domestics, not remembering the contract which they had made with their masters, entered their chambers without knowing where they were. And as man is born with curiosity, they opened all the cabinets;

as man also, by nature, loves the lustre of silver and gold, without the aid of Memory, they seized on all that they could find. The masters wished to exclaim "thieves"—but the idea of thief had escaped from their brains, and they could not call to their expression the term. Every one having forgot the idioms of his language, articulated shapeless sounds. It was infinitely worse than Babel, where every one, in an instant, invented a new language. The innate sentiment which the young valets felt for the beautiful women, impressed them so powerfully, that the insolent fellows threw themselves, inconsiderately, on the first married ladies or virgins that they could find, be they tavern-keepers wives, or presidents ladies, and those, not remembering the lessons of chastity that they had received, permitted them to proceed to every liberty.

Dinner time approached, but no one knew where he must go to procure one. No one had been to market either to sell, or buy. The domestics had taken the habits of the masters, and the masters those of the domestics. All the world stared on one another with the eyes of blockheads. Those who had the greatest skill to procure themselves necessaries, (and these were the lowest order of the people) found somewhat to live on—the rest wanted every thing. The first president, and the archbishop, went naked, while their grooms went, the one in scarlet robes, and the other in lawn sleeves. All was confounded, all were perishing in misery and hunger, from the want of knowledge.

At the end of some days, the Muses took pity on the poor race: the Muses are good, although they sometimes execute their wrath on the wicked; they supplicated therefore their mother, to restore to those blasphemers the Memory of which she had deprived them. Mnemosyne descended to the house of the Contrarians, where they had with so much temerity insulted her, and spoke to them in these words.

"Weak mortals, I forgive you, but remember that
"without the senses there is no Memory, and that
"without the Memory there is no genius."

The

The Dicastericians thanked her very drily, and stopped her to remonstrate on the matter. The Jansenists introduced the whole adventure into their Gazette, where it might be perceived that they were hardly recovered.—The Jesuits intrigued at court, and M. Cogé, altogether thunderstruck with the adventure, but understanding nothing of it, gave to his scholars this excellent axiom: “Non magis musis quam hominibus in-
“fensa est ista quæ vocatur memoria.”

T O

M. S*** OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

Ferney, 10 November, 1770.

YOUR epistle, my dear friend, is as philosophical as it is ingenious. You have reason in every point, except on that which regards me.

I know well that there will always be people who will make war against reason, and that there are, in fact, soldiers of the long robe kept constantly in pay to serve against her—But it is happy to see that this stranger finds an asylum with all the honest men of Europe, and that her empire is fixed.

'Tis long ere mankind will endure,
Or ope, to reason's call, the door;
But soon as she an entry gains,
The mistress of the house she reigns.

Her enemy loses, every day, his credit more and more, from Moscou even to Cadix. I should be truly unhappy to see her set at too great a distance from philosophy. This cursed book, “The System of Nature,” is a crime against nature—I know well that you are
O 4 inclined

inclined to reprove Atheism, and that you love this
verse:

“Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.”

If there is no God, we must invent one.

I am rarely pleased with my own verse, but I own
that I have all the tenderness of a father for this.

The enemies of final causes appear to me daily, more
hardly than reasonable—If they happen to meet with a
peg and a hole, they acknowledge without hesitation,
that the one was made for the other; but they will not
agree that the sun was made for the planets, &c. &c.

OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

YOUR humble servant, my dear friend, is as philosophi-
cal as it is ingenious. You have reason in every
point, except in that which regards me.
I know well that there will always be people who
will make war against reason, and that there are, in fact,
to the end of the long robe kept constantly in play to drive
against her—But it is happy to see that this banner
finds an ally in all the honest men of Europe, and
that her empire is fixed.

The multitude of the hostile signs.
But soon as the an entry gains.
Or goes to reason's cell, the door;
The tongue is standing will endure.

Her enemy loses, every day, his credit more and
more, from Merton even to Cadix. I should be truly
sorry to see her set at too great a distance from phi-
losophy. This cursed book, “The System of Nature,”
is a crime against nature—I know well that you are
inclined

MISCELLANIES

OF

LITERATURE, HISTORY,

AND

PHILOSOPHY.

ON THE ENCYCLOPÉDIE.

A Domestic of Louis XV. told me, that one day the king his master, supping at Trianon, in a small company, the conversation turned by chance upon hunting, and afterwards on gunpowder. Some one said, that the best powder was made with equal parts of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal. The duke de la Velli—, more acquainted with the matter than the rest, asserted that in order to make good gunpowder, one part only of sulphur, and one of charcoal, must be taken to five parts of saltpetre, dissolved in nitre well filtrated, well evaporated, and well crystalized.

“It is pleasant,” says the duke de N—, “that we should amuse ourselves every day with killing partridges in the park of Versailles, and sometimes with killing men on the frontiers, and yet not know precisely with what we kill them.”

“Alas! we are involved in the same ignorance of almost every thing,” replies Madame de Pompadour. “I know not what it is that composes the rouge with which I paint my cheeks, and I should be very much embarrassed to answer, if I were asked how the silk stockings, which I now wear, are made.”

“ ’Tis

" 'Tis pity, then," says the Duke de la Vall—, " that his Majesty has confiscated our " Dictionnaires " Encyclopediques," which cost us, each, a hundred " pistoles. We should instantly have found in them " the explication of all our doubts."

The king justified the seizure he had made. He had been advised, that one-and twenty volumes in folio, which were to be found on the toilette of every lady, was a circumstance, of all things in the world, the most dangerous for the kingdom of France, and he had a wish to know the truth of this before he permitted the book to be read.—When supper was ended, three pages of the bedchamber were dispatched for a copy of the *Encyclopedia*, who returned, each of them carrying seven volumes with great pain.

They saw, on the article " powder," that the Duke de la Vall— had spoken with reason, and immediately Madame de Pompadour discovered the difference between the antient rouge of Spain, with which the ladies of Madrid coloured their cheeks, and the rouge which the ladies of Paris used. She found that the Grecian and Roman ladies were painted with the purple, which was drawn from the murex, and that consequently our scarlet was the purple of the antients—she found also that they put a great deal of saffron into the Spanish rouge, and a great deal of cochineal into the French.

She found, beside, that stocking-making was a trade, and the machine in which they were wrought, charmed her exceedingly.

" Ah! delightful book!" exclaimed she, " Sire, you " have suppressed this magazine of all that is useful, " for the purpose of engrossing it yourself, and that " you may be the only learned person in your king- " dom."

All the company now fell upon the volumes as the daughters of Lycomedes did on the trinkets of Achilles. Each one found, on the instant, all that he sought for. Those who were at law, were surprized to find the decision of their process.—The king read in it all the prerogatives and rights of the crown, " but truly," says he,

he, "I know not wherefore they told me so often of
 "the danger of this book." "What! do you not see,"
 says the duke de N——, "that it is because it is so
 "good? We do not inveigh against the indifferent
 "and the bad of any kind of writing.—If the ladies
 "strive to render ridiculous any new comer, be as-
 "sured, she is more beautiful than themselves."

During this time, others were turning over the leaves
 and reading. The Count de C—— said, with energy,
 "Sire—you are truly fortunate that there have lived
 "men, in your reign, capable of gaining a knowledge
 "of all the arts, and of transmitting them to posterity.
 "—Every thing is here described—from the manner of
 "making a pin, to that of casting and pointing a can-
 "non—every thing from the infinitely little to the
 "infinitely great. Thank God, that there have arisen
 "men in your kingdom, who have thus served the
 "universe at large. Other people must purchase the
 "Encyclopedia, or counterfeit it. Take all my for-
 "tune, if you please, but give me my Encyclo-
 "pedia."

"They say, besides," replied the king, "that there
 "are many faults in this book so necessary, and so ad-
 "mirable."

"Sire," replies the Count de C——, "there have
 "been two ragouts wanting, to-night, at table—we
 "have not eat them consequently, yet we have made a
 "very excellent supper—But would you wish me to
 "throw all the supper out at the window on account of
 "those two ragouts?" The king perceived the force of
 reason—every one recovered his right, and the day con-
 cluded in harmony.

Envy and ignorance did not stay to be beaten. These
 two immortal sisters continued their clamours, their
 cabals, and their persecutions—ignorance, in that re-
 spect, is very learned.

What was the consequence. Foreigners made four
 editions of this French work, proscribed in France,
 and gained thereby about sixty-eight hundred thousand
 crowns.

Learn,

Learn, Frenchmen, for the future, to be more attentive to your interests.

A N

HISTORICAL EULOGY

O N

R E A S O N.

PRONOUNCED IN A PROVINCIAL ACADEMY.

By M.

GENTLEMEN,

ERASMUS made, in the eleventh century, an Eulogy upon folly. You have appointed me to give you an eulogy on Reason.—Reason is not intreated and received with welcome, till more than two hundred years after her enemy. In many places her reception is much more tardy, and there are some nations, with whom she has not, as yet, been seen at all.

She was so unknown among us, in the days of Druidism, that she had not even a name in our language. Cæsar did not introduce her either into Switzerland, Autun, or Paris, which last was little more than a village of fishers; and even he himself hardly understood Reason.

He had so many great qualities, that Reason could not find a place in the crowd. This magnanimous Insensible departed from our ravaged country, to go and ravage his own, and to bring upon himself three-and-twenty stabs of the poignard, from three-and-twenty other illustrious and enraged heroes, who did not value him.

The

The Sicambrian, Clodovix, or Clovis, came about five hundred years afterwards, to exterminate one part of our nation, and subjugate the other. They knew not how to speak of Reason—either in his army, or in our unhappy little villages—unless it was the Reason of being the most powerful.

We continued a long time in this horrible and humiliating barbarity—The crusades did not serve to emancipate us from it. This, in truth, was a species of folly the most universal, the most atrocious, the most ridiculous, and the most unhappy. The abominable folly of civil and sacred war, which extirpated so many nations of the languages of Oc and Oueil, succeeded to these remote Crusades. Reason had no wish to be found here. Then politics reigned at Rome, and had for her ministers, two sisters, Fraud and Avarice. Ignorance, fanaticism, and fury, overspread, beneath their orders, all Europe—poverty followed of course, while Reason concealed herself in a well, with her daughter, Truth. No one discovered where this well was; and had they but suspected, they would have descended to cut the throats both of mother and daughter.

After that the Turks had taken Constantinople, and doubled the dreadful calamities of Europe, two or three Greeks, flying from their country, stumbled into this well, or rather cavern, half dead with fatigue, hunger, and fear.

Reason received them with humanity, and gave them to eat, without distinction of viands, a circumstance which they had never experienced at Constantinople. They received from her, some short instructions, for Reason is never prolix. She made them swear that they would never discover the place of her retreat. They departed, and arrived, after much journeying, at the courts of Charles V. and Francis I.

They were received as jugglers, who had come to perform tricks of agility, to amuse the vacant hours of courtizans, and ladies, in the intervals of intrigue. The ministers deigned to observe them, in the moments of relaxation, which they could take from the confinement

finement of business.—They were even entertained by the emperor, and the king of France, who threw a side-glance on them, as they were passing towards their mistresses. But they found the richest welcome in the villages, among the honest countrymen, who had even then, I know not how, some glimmering of common sense.

These feeble glimmerings of sense were extinguished through all Europe, by the civil wars that overwhelmed it.—Two or three sparks of Reason could not illuminate the world amidst the flames of torches, and funeral piles that bigotry had kindled, and kept burning for so many years.—Reason, and her daughter, concealed themselves more than ever.

The disciples of their first apostles had destroyed themselves, excepting some few who were so inconsiderate as to preach up Reason unreasonably and unseasonably. They deprived them of their lives, as they did Socrates of his, but no one paid any attention to the murder. Nothing is so disagreeable as to be hanged obscurely. So much time was taken up with observing the Saint-Bartholomews—the massacres of Ireland—the burnings of Hungary—the assassination of kings, that people had neither time, nor liberty of mind to think of little crimes, or attend to secret calamities, which over-run the earth, from one end to the other.

Reason, informed of all that passed, by some exiles that took refuge in her retreat, was touched with pity, although she has not the character of being very tender. Her daughter, who is more hardy, encouraged her to go forth into the world, and strive to heal it.—They departed—they spoke—but they found so many interested wicked men to oppose—so many weak men in the trammels of those wicked—so many careless and indifferent men attentive only to themselves, and the present moment, who would not embarrass themselves either with them, or with their enemies, that they wisely regained their asylum.

In

In the mean time, some seeds of fruits which they always carried with them, and which they had sown, grew in the earth, and flourished without corruption.

In fine, some time after this, they came to the resolution, to go on a pilgrimage to Rome, disguised, and concealing their names for fear of the Inquisition. On their arrival, they addressed themselves to the cook of Pope Ganganelli, Clement XIV.—They knew that of all the cooks in Rome, he was the least employed. He might himself say, Gentlemen, before your confessors that he was the least busy man, of any in his profession.

This good man, after having given to the two pilgrims, a dinner, almost as frugal as that of the Pope, introduced them to his holiness; whom they found reading the thoughts of Marcus-Aurelius. The Pope recognized the characters—he embraced them cordially—“In spite of etiquette, ladies,” said he to them, “if I could have imagined that you had been upon earth, I would have paid you the first visit.”

After compliments had passed, they conversed on public affairs. On the next day, Ganganelli abolished the bull, “*In cœnâ Domini*” one of the greatest monuments of human folly that had so long outraged all the potentates. The day after he took the resolution to destroy the company of Garasse, Guignard, Garnet, Bussembaum, Malagrida, Paulian, Patouillet, and Nonotte;—Europe clapped their hands for joy. On the following day he diminished the imposts, of which the people complained—he encouraged agriculture, and all the arts—he made himself beloved of all those who were the enemies of his sect—and it was said in Rome, that there was but one nation, and one law in the universe.

The two pilgrims, very much astonished and satisfied, took leave of the Pope, who presented them not with an *Agnus-Dei*, and relicks, but with a good postchaise, to continue their journey—Reason, and Truth, had never been in the habit of enjoying ease before.

They

They visited all Italy, and were surprized to find there, in the place of Machiavelism, an emulation between the princes and the republics, to make their subjects more virtuous, rich, and happy.

"My daughter," said Reason to Truth, "I believe
 "our reign begins at last to have existence, after our
 "long imprisonment. Surely, some of the prophets,
 "who came to visit us in our well, have been most
 "fruitful in language and active measures, thus to
 "change the face of the earth. You see that all comes
 "to pass slowly. The clouds of ignorance and false-
 "hood must be dissipated, before you can re-enter
 "your palace of light, from which you have been ex-
 "pelled, as well as I, for so many ages.—It shall now
 "happen to us, as it has happened to nature—she has
 "been covered with a wicked veil, and quite disfigured
 "for innumerable years—In fine, there have come a
 "Galileo, a Copernicus, a Newton, who arose almost
 "naked, and who have rendered men amiable."

In conversing thus, they arrived at Venice; that which they considered there with the greatest attention, was a procurator of St. Mark, who held in his hand, a huge pair of scissars, before a table covered with claws, beaks, and black feathers. "Ah," exclaimed Reason, "God forgive me, Lustrissimo Signor, I believe that I see one of my pairs of scissars, which I carried with me to my well, when I took refuge there with my daughter—How did your excellency procure them, and to what use do you apply them?" "Lustrissimo Signora," replies the procurator, "it is possible that these scissars have belonged to your excellence, but they were brought hither a long time ago, by one named Fra Paolo, and they serve us to cut the claws of the inquisition, which you see displayed upon the table."

"These black feathers belonged to the harpies who came to devour the bread of the republic. We are daily employed in clipping their wings, and the points of their beaks—without this precaution, they would have ruined us by swallowing all up—nothing
 "would

“ would have remained either for our wise men, our
 “ *pregadi*, or our citizens.

“ If you pass through France, you will find per-
 “ haps your other pair of scissars, with a Spanish
 “ minister, which he applies to the same use in his
 “ own country, that we do these here, and which will,
 “ one day, be the blessing of humankind.”

Our travellers after having assisted at the Venetian opera, departed for Germany. They beheld, with satisfaction, this country, which in the time of Charlemagne, had been an immense forest, intersected with marshes, now covered with flourishing and tranquil villages. This country peopled with sovereigns, had from barbarity and poverty, risen into magnificence and refinement. This country, which in ancient times was cursed with forcerers for priests, and where men were sacrificed upon stones, rudely hollowed—this country which had streamed with its own blood, for the purpose of ascertaining precisely if the matter was *in, cum, sub*, or the contrary—this country which had afterwards received into its bosom three contending religious enemies—furnished to the travellers a subject of astonishment, when they saw it in peace and tranquillity, and the people living in friendship together—“ God be
 “ praised,” said Reason, “ these people are returned at
 “ last to me in spite of falsehood.”

They were introduced to an empress who was much more than reasonable, for she was bountiful. The pilgrims were so delighted with her, that they paid no regard to some customs that offended them—they were still more enamoured of the emperor her son.

Their astonishment was doubled when they arrived in Sweden, “ What,” said they, “ a revolution so difficult
 “ and at the same time so sudden!—so dangerous and
 “ yet so peaceable! and after the accomplishment of
 “ this great day, to see not one day lost without some
 “ act of benevolence! and all this in an age which is
 “ so rarely that of Reason. We have done well to quit
 “ our concealment, when this great event hath seized
 “ the admiration of all Europe.”

From thence they passed quickly through Poland,
“ Ah! my mother, what a contrast,” exclaimed Truth,
“ I am even tempted to regain my well. Behold the
“ effects of destroying the most useful part of human-
“ kind, and of treating the tillers of the land worse
“ than they would have treated their beasts of burthen.
“ This chaos of anarchy could never be dispelled but
“ by the ruin of the country—it was but too truly
“ foretold. I pity a monarch so virtuous, wise, and
“ humane, and I dare hope, that he will yet be happy;
“ since the other kings begin to be so, and that your
“ light begins to communicate itself to them, one after
“ another.

“ Come, let us proceed,” continued she, “ to ob-
“ serve a change more favourable and more surprizing
“ —Come let us penetrate this immense northern re-
“ gion, which but eighty years ago was so barbarous,
“ and which now is so enlightened and invincible.—
“ Come let us contemplate her who hath accomplished
“ the miracle of a new creation.” They went and
they found that report had not been sufficiently lavish
in her praise.

They could not cease to admire how much the world
had been changed in a few years.—They concluded
that one day, perhaps, Chili and Terra-australis might
be the centre of politeness and taste, and that we must
go to the antarctic pole to learn the arts of life.

When they arrived in England, Truth said to her
mother, “ It appears to me that the good fortune of
“ this nation has differed from that of all others.—
“ They have been more foolish, more fanatic, more
“ cruel, and more miserable than any that I know, and
“ yet behold how uniform their government is, in
“ which they have preserved all that is useful in a mo-
“ narchy, and all that is necessary in a republic.—They
“ are superior to all in war—in laws—in the arts, and
“ in commerce. I see them only bound in by North
“ America, which they have conquered, at one end of
“ the world, and the very finest provinces of India,
“ which they subdued at the other. How are they
“ capable

“capable of bearing these two burthens of felicity?”
 “The burthen is indeed heavy,” said Reason, “but
 “from what little I have heard, they will invent lea-
 “vers that will render it sufficiently light.”

Reason and Truth then passed into France. They
 had once already made their appearance there, and had
 been driven away. “You remember,” said Truth to
 her mother, “the extreme anxiety which we had to
 “establish ourselves with the French, in the good days
 “of Louis XIV. but the impertinent quarrels of the
 “Jesuits and Jansenists obliged us to fly. The conti-
 “nual complaints of the people prevented our return.
 “I now hear the acclamations of twenty millions of
 “men, who give thanks to Heaven—the one part ex-
 “claim,” ‘This accession is so much the more joyous,
 ‘that we do not pay for our joy.’ “The other part
 “say,”—‘Extravagance is mere vanity—double em-
 ‘ployments—superfluous expences—excessive profits,
 ‘are all about to be retrenched’—“and they have Rea-
 “son”—‘Every new impost is to be abolished,’ “and
 “they have need, for every individual must pay for
 “the public good.”

‘The laws will be uniform’—“Nothing is more to
 “be desired, though nothing is more difficult.” ‘There
 ‘will be set apart for indigent travellers, and especially
 ‘for poor officers, the immense treasures of certain
 ‘idlers who make a shew of poverty.—These holders of
 ‘mortmain have been no more themselves than the
 ‘slaves of mortmain—There will be found no more
 ‘porters of monks driving, from their own paternal
 ‘doors, orphans reduced to beggary for the purpose of
 ‘enriching with their fortunes, a convent that fattens
 ‘on the lordly possessions which were the rights of
 ‘ancient conquerors.—There will be found no more
 ‘families vainly intreating alms at the gate of a convent,
 ‘which has ruined them.’—“Thank God! nothing is
 “more worthy of a king.—The king of Sardinia has
 “corrected this abominable abuse—and may Heaven
 “grant that it be exterminated in France!

“ Do you not hear, my mother, the number of
 “ voices that say,” ‘ The marriages of hundred thou-
 ‘ sands of families useful to the state shall be no longer
 ‘ reputed concubinages, and the children be no longer
 ‘ declared bastards by the law.’ “ Nature, justice, and
 “ you, my mother, all demand, on this great object,
 “ a wise rule that may be compatible with the quiet
 “ of the kingdom, and with the rights of men.”

‘ The profession of a soldier shall be rendered so ho-
 ‘ nourable, that no one shall in future attempt to de-
 ‘ sert it.’—“ The thing is possible, but delicate.”

‘ Little faults shall not be punished equal to great
 ‘ crimes, because there ought to be proportion in all
 ‘ things—A barbarous law, obscurely published and
 ‘ badly interpreted, shall no more cause to perish under
 ‘ bars of iron, and in the flames, children indiscreet
 ‘ and imprudent, as if they had assassinated their fathers
 ‘ and mothers.’—“ This ought to be the first axiom
 “ of criminal justice.”

‘ The goods of a father of a family shall be no longer
 ‘ confiscated—because the children ought not to perish
 ‘ with want, for the crimes of their fathers—and the
 ‘ King has no need of this miserable confiscation.’—
 “ Wonderful!—this is worthy the munificence of a
 “ sovereign.”

‘ The torture invented, of old, by robbers to force
 ‘ the people to discover their treasures, and employed now
 ‘ by some few nations, to save the strong and robust
 ‘ criminal, and to destroy the feeble innocent, in soul
 ‘ and body—shall never from henceforth be in use but in
 ‘ crimes of high treason, and for the discovery of ac-
 ‘ complices—but such crimes will no more be commit-
 ‘ ted.’—“ It cannot be better—Let us attend to the
 “ vow which I understand concludes the whole, and I
 “ will write all these great changes in my annals—I who
 “ am Truth.

“ I hear also declared in all the tribunals round, these
 “ remarkable words,”—‘ We shall no more invoke and
 ‘ name together *the two puissances*; because there can
 ‘ exist but one, to wit, that of the king, or of the
 ‘ law,

* law, in a monarchy; and of the nation in a republic.
 * The divine puissance is of a nature so different and so
 * superior, that it ought not be debased by a profane al-
 * liance with human laws. The infinite cannot be join-
 * ed to the finite. Gregory VII. was the first who dared
 * to call the infinite being to his assistance, in his strange
 * and unparalleled wars, against Henry IV. an empe-
 * ror very finite, that is to say, very limited. These wars
 * have overflowed all Europe with blood for a long time.
 * But at last these awful beings, who have nothing in
 * common, are separated, and it is the only means of
 * enjoying peace.

“ This discourse which employs all the heads of the
 “ law, appears to me very forcible. I know that they
 “ do not recognize two puissances, either in China, in
 “ the Indies, in Persia, in Constantinople, in Moscow,
 “ in London, &c. But I refer to you, my mother,
 “ I will write nothing concerning it which you do not
 “ dictate.”

Reason replied to her, “ My daughter you are fully
 “ sensible that I wish for these changes and many others.
 “ All this will demand time and reflection. I have al-
 “ ways been very content when, in my misfortunes, I
 “ have received a part of my wishes.—To-day I am
 “ truly happy.

“ You remember the time, when, almost all the
 “ kings of the earth being at peace, they amused them-
 “ selves with playing at enigmas,—and when the good
 “ queen of Sheba came to propose riddles, face to face,
 “ to Solomon?” “ Yes, my mother, it was a happy
 “ time, but it did not last.” “ Well,” replies the
 mother, “ the present is infinitely better.—They thought
 “ of nothing then but displaying a little sprightly
 “ genius. But I see now that for several years,
 “ genius has been applied in Europe to the discovery of
 “ necessary arts and virtues which sweeten the gall of
 “ life. It appears to me that Heaven has empowered
 “ men to think more solidly in the present day, than
 “ they have done before in the course of thousands of
 “ ages. You who from your nature, cannot lie, tell

"me what time you would choose, in preference to the present, to establish yourself in France?"

"I have the reputation," replies the daughter, "to speak things sufficiently severe to those people with whom I sojourn, and you know well that I have constantly been forced to it. But I acknowledge that I have nothing to say, but good of the present, in spite of all those who praise nothing but the past."

"I ought to instruct posterity that it is in this age that men have learned to guard themselves from frightful and mortal distempers, by giving to themselves those less miserable,—to restore life to those who have perished in the waters,—to govern and to brave thunder, to calculate to a fixed point, which was before fought for in vain, from the west to the east,—they have done more in morality, they have dared to demand justice of the laws, against the law, which have condemned virtue to punishment, and this justice has been at times obtained.—In fine, they have dared to pronounce the word Toleration.

"Well, my dear daughter, let us rejoice in these good days.—Let us remain here while they continue —but if tempests and troubles return, let us again retire into our well."

A
D I A L O G U E
B E T W E E N
A CALOYERIAN* AND A GOOD MAN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE VULGAR GREEK BY

D. L. F. R. C. D. C. D. G.

THE CALOYERIAN.

MAY I demand of you, Sir, what religion you profess in Alep, in the midst of the croud of differing sects which are tolerated here, and which altogether serve to render this great city so flourishing? are you a Mahometan of the order of Omar, or of that of Aly? Do you follow the dogmas of the ancient Parses, or of the Sabians so much more ancient, or of the Brahmins who boast of an antiquity still more remote? are you a Jew? are you a Christian of the Grecian faith, of the Arminian, of the Cophtic, or of the Latin?

THE HONEST MAN.

I adore God—I strive to be just, and I study to be wise.

THE CALOYERIAN.

But do you not give the preference to the Jewish books on the Zenda-Vesta, on the Vedam, and on the Alcoran?

THE HONEST MAN.

I fear that I have not penetration enough to judge rightly of books, but I know that I am capable of reading the great book of nature, which teaches us to adore and to love our maker.

* A religious sect in Greece.

THE CALOYERIAN.

Is there any thing which embarrasses you in the Jewish books?

THE HONEST MAN.

Yes, I confess that I am very much puzzled to conceive what they assert. I see in them some incompatibilities which astonish my weak reason.

In the first place, it appears to me strange that Moses should have written the Pentateuch, which they ascribe to him, in a desert. If the people came from Ægypt, where he had lived, says the author, four hundred years (although he cheated himself of two hundred) this book was probably written in Ægypt; and they tell us that it was in Hebrew.

It must have been engraved on stone or wood, for they had not in the time of Moses, any other manner of writing. It was a very difficult art, and required long preparation. The wood or the stone was to be polished. There is no probability that this art could be exercised in a desert, or even that this book could have been so. The Jewish horde had not even materials to make themselves cloaths and shoes, and God was obliged to work continued miracles, for forty years, to preserve their raiment and their shoes from perishing. It is so true that they could not write on any thing but wood, that the author of the book of Joshua says that Deuteronomy was written on an altar of unpolished stones done over with mortar; which apparently shews that Joshua had never the intention of rendering his book durable.

Secondly. Men the most versed in antiquity, think that these books have been written more than seven hundred years after Moses. They ground their opinion on this. They speak of kings, and there were no kings till a long time after Moses—on the position of the cities, which renders it false if the book was written in the desert, but true if written at Jerusalem—on the names of the cities and villages of which it speaks, and

and which were not founded nor called by the names which were given to them till many centuries after, &c.

Thirdly. That which prejudices me a little against the books attributed to Moses, is, that the immortality of the soul, and rewards and punishments after death, are entirely neglected in the enumeration of his laws. It is strange that he should appoint the manner in which we ought to go to stool, and yet speak nothing of the immortality of the soul. Could it be possible that Moses, inspired by God, preferred our excrement to our souls, or that he should prescribe the method of going to the necessary, in the Israelitish camp, and yet say not a single word of life eternal. Zoroaster, prior to the Jewish lawgiver, said, "Honour and love your parents, if you wish to have eternal life." And the Decalogue says, "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the earth." It appears that Zoroaster spoke as a man of divine nature, and Moses as an earthly man.

Fourthly. The events related in the Pentateuch astonish those who have the unhappiness to judge only by their reason, and where blind reason is not enlightened by any particular grace. The first chapter of Genesis is so much above our conceptions, that the Jews themselves were prohibited from reading it before they were twenty-five years of age.

We see, with a little surprize, that God came every day at noon to take a walk in the garden of Eden—that the sources of four rivers prodigiously distant the one from the other, formed a fountain in this same garden—that the serpent should speak to Eve, although it is the most subtile of all animals, and that an ass, which has not the character of so much subtilty, should speak also many ages after. That God separated the light from darkness, as if darkness was matter—that he made the light which flows from the sun, before he made the sun itself—that after having made man and woman, he had afterwards to make the woman from a rib of the man—that he put flesh into the place of the rib—that he

he condemned Adam to eternal death, and all his posterity, for an apple—and that he placed a mark upon Cain, who had assassinated his brother, because this Cain was afraid of being killed by the men who then peopled the earth, although, agreeable to the text, the human race was confined to the family of Adam—that pretended cataraëts in the Heavens overwhelmed the earth, and that all the animals assembled to confine themselves, in an ark, for a whole year.

After this prodigious number of fables that appear altogether more absurd than the metamorphoses of Ovid, we are not less surprized that God should deliver to servitude in Egypt, six hundred thousand warriors of his people, without reckoning the old men, the children and the women—that these six hundred thousand warriors, after the most transcendant miracles, which were however equalled by the Egyptian magicians, should fly from instead of attacking their enemies—that flying they should not take the road which God conducted them to—that they should find themselves between Memphis and the Red Sea—that God should open to them this sea, and make them pass over with dry feet, in order to leave them to perish in the frightful deserts instead of leading them to the land of promise—that this people under the very hand and eye of God, should demand of Moses's brother a golden calf to worship—that this golden calf should be cast in one day—that Moses should resolve this golden calf into impalpable powder, and make the people swallow it—that twenty-three thousand of this people should permit themselves to be slaughtered by the Levites in punishment for having erected this golden calf, and that Aaron, who made the calf, should be chosen high-priest as a reward—that two hundred and fifty men were burnt on the one side, and fourteen thousand seven hundred on the other, who murmured at, and disputed the authority of Aaron—and that on another occasion Moses ordered twenty-four thousand of the people to be put to death.

Fifthly. If we confine ourselves to the simple knowledge of physic, and that we are not lifted up by any
divine

divine inspiration, it will be difficult for us to think, that a water should possess the quality of condemning women who are adulteresses to death, and of raising those who are faithful into respect.

We see besides with the greatest astonishment a true prophet in the midst of idolaters in the person of Balaam.

Sixthly. It is still more surprizing that in a village of the little country of Midian the people of the Jews found 67,500 sheep, 72,000 oxen, 61,000 asses, 32,000 virgins; and we shiver with horror when we read that the Jews, by the Lord's order, massacred all the males, and all the married women, wives and mothers, and that they saved none but the virgins.

Seventhly. The sun who stood still at mid day to give more time to the Jews to slay the Amorites, already crushed by a shower of stones, from the Heavens—the Jordan that opened its bed, like the red sea, to permit the children of Israel to pass, although they might so easily have forded it—the walls of Jericho that fell on the sound of trumpets. So many prodigies of every kind, in short, exact, to gain belief, the sacrifice of our reason, and a faith the most lively. In fine, to what point did so many miracles wrought by God himself, for so many ages, in favour of his people, tend? to render them almost always the slaves of other nations.

Eighthly. All the history of Sampson, his amours, and his hair; his lion, and his three hundred foxes, appear to be made rather to amuse the imagination than to edify the judgment. Those of Joshua and Jephtha appear barbarous.

Ninthly. The history of the kings is a collection of cruelties and assassinations that makes the heart bleed. Almost all the events and actions are incredible. Saul, the first Jewish king, found nothing in his kingdom, but a couple of swords; and his successor, David, left twenty thousand millions of ready money. You say that these books were written by God himself; you know

know that God cannot lie, therefore if there is one falsehood, the whole must be an imposition.

Tenthly. The prophets are not less disgusting to a man who has not the talent of discovering the concealed and allegorical sense of their predictions. He sees with pain Jeremiah equip himself with a packfaddle and a collar, and cause himself to be bound with cords. Hosea whom God commanded in formal terms, to adopt the son of a whore, and to marry a public whore, and afterwards an adultress.—Isaiah who walks naked in a public place.—Ezekiel, who lies three hundred and ninety days on the left side, and forty on the right; who eats a roll of parchment; who covered his bread with human excrement, and afterwards with cow's dung.—Aholah and Aholibah, who established a brothel, and to whom God said that they loved only the member of an ass, and the sperm of a horse. Certainly if the reader is not instructed in the customs of countries, and in the manner of prophecy, he would consider himself scandalized and affronted by such tales, and when he sees Elisha cause forty infants to be devoured by bears, for calling him "Baldhead,"—a chastisement so little proportioned to the offence, he will be inspired with horror rather than with respect.

Pardon me then if the Jewish books create in me some embarrassment. I do not wish to vilify the object of your veneration. I confess even that I fear I deceive myself on matters of decency and justice which have not been the same in all ages. I believe that our manners are different from those of remote ages. But perhaps also the preference that you give to the New Testament over the Old, may serve to justify my scruples. It is evident that the Jewish law does not appear to you to be good, else why have you abandoned it? for if it was really good, why would you not always follow it? and if it is bad, how can it be divine?

THE CALOYERIAN.

The Old Testament has its difficulties. But you acknowledge to me, then, that the New Testament hath not created in you the same doubts and scruples?

THE HONEST MAN.

I have read them both with attention. Permit me to lay before you the inquietudes that arise from my ignorance—you will lament and strive to appease them.

I meet here with the Christian Armenians, who say that it is not permitted to us to eat hares—with the Greeks, who assure us that the holy spirit does not proceed from the son—with the Nestorians, who deny that Mary is the mother of Jesus—with some Latins who boast that towards the west, the Christians of Europe think differently from those of Asia and Africa. I know that ten or twelve sects in Europe anathematize each other. The Mussulmen who surround me, regard with an eye of contempt all those Christians, whom at the same time they tolerate. The Jews hold equally in execration both Christians and Mussulmen. The Guebrians despise them all; and the few who remain of the Sabeans would not eat with any one of those that I have named: the Brahmins cannot endure either the Sabeans, the Guebrians, the Christians, the Mahometans, or the Jews.

I have a hundred times wished that Jesus Christ, in becoming incarnate in Judea, had re-united all these sects under his laws—I demand of myself wherefore, being God, he did not practise the rights of the Divinity? wherefore coming to deliver us from our sins, he should leave us in sin? wherefore coming to enlighten all men, he should leave almost all men in error?

I know that I am nothing—I know that from the breast of my nothingness I ought not to interrogate the Being of beings; but it is permitted to me, as it was to Job, to raise my submissive complaints from the bottom of my misery.

What

What would you have me to think, when I see two genealogies of Jesus directly contrary the one to the other; and that these genealogies, which are so different in their names, and in the number of his ancestors, are not yet his own, but those of his father Joseph, who at the same time is not his father?

I put my soul to the torture to comprehend how God is dead. I read the sacred and profane writings of his time, and one only of these sacred books tells me, that a new star appeared in the east and conducted the wise men to the feet of God, when he came from the womb of Mary. Not one of the profane writers speaks of this event, which would naturally be memorable to the end of time, and which necessarily must have been perceived in every part of the world, and be marked in all the fairs of every country. An evangelist tells me that a king named Herod, to whom the Romans, masters of the known world, had given the kingdom of Judea, had heard it said that an infant, who was born in a stable, ought to be king of the Jews: but how, and from whom did he hear, and on what foundation did he believe this strange relation? is it possible, that this king, who had not lost his senses, could agree to cut the throats of all the infants in the country for the purpose of enveloping, in the massacre, one obscure child? Is there an example upon earth of a fury so abominable and so insensible?

I see that the evangelists which remain, contradict themselves in almost every page. I open the history of Josephus, an author nearly cotemporary; Josephus the parent of Mariamne who was sacrificed by Herod—Josephus the natural enemy of this prince; and yet I find he says not a syllable of this slaughter. He is a Jew, and yet he speaks not a word of Jesus, who was born among the Jews.

Incertitudes increase in the important research of that which I ought to adore, and of that which I ought to believe. I read the scriptures, and I find no part wherein Jesus, acknowledged afterwards to be God, would yet call himself God. I see even the

the contrary: he says that his father is greater than him—that the father alone knows that which the son is ignorant of. How therefore ought these words of father and son to be understood by the people—how by the sons of Belial whom we wish to call wicked—how by the sons of God, whom we describe as just men? I adopt several maxims of the morality of Jesus, but what legislator ever taught bad morality? In what religion is adultery, theft, murder, and fraud defended? and in what, is not respect to our parents, obedience to the laws, and the practice of every virtue expressly ordained.

The more I read, the more is my pain encreased. I seek for prodigies and miracles worthy of God, and attested by the universe—I dare to say with that painful openness which fears to blaspheme, that the devils expelled in a body from the troop of swine—the water changed into wine for the benefit of people who were drunk—A fig-tree dried up for not having brought figs before the time, &c. do not fill me with an idea, that I was made by the Lord of nature, who announces and proves the truth by shining and useful miracles. Can I adore this Lord of nature in the person of a Jew, who, they say, was transported by the devil to the top of a mountain where he discovered to him all the kingdoms of the earth?

I read the words which they report to be his. I see there a neighbour arrived from the kingdom of Heaven, figured by a grain of mustard—by a line to take fish with—by a supper to which the blind and the lame are forced to enter, &c. Jesus says that we do not put new wine into old bottles, because we love old wine better than new. Is it thus that God speaks?

In fine, how can I recognize God in the person of a Jew of vulgar extraction, condemned to death for having spoken amiss of the magistrates to the people, and who sweated drops of blood, in the agonies and the terror which his approaching fate inspired him with. Is he a Plato, a Socrates, an Antoninus, an Epictetus, a Zaleucus, a Solon, or a Confucius? which of all these

these wise men has not written and spoken in a manner more conformable to the ideas that we have of wisdom? and how can we judge otherways but by our ideas?

When I told you that I had adopted several of the maxims of Jesus, you ought to have thought that I could not adopt them all. I have been very much hurt on reading these expressions,—“ I am come not “ to bring peace, but the sword.”—“ I am come to “ divide the son and the father—the daughter and the “ mother—and the parent from the child.” I confess to you that these words have impressed me with sorrow and affright; and if I regarded them as the words of a prophet, I should believe that I saw the accomplishment of them in the quarrels that divided the primitive Christians—in the civil wars that have kept arms in their hands for so many ages—in the assassinations of so many princes—and in the horrid disasters of so many families.

I confess to you at the same time, that I am moved both with indignation and pity, when I see Peter make his followers deliver to him their money. Ananias and Saphira having saved some part of the price of their field, for themselves, concealed it; and Peter punished both the man and his wife with sudden death for doing so. Alas! this is not the miracle that I should expect from those, who say they wish not the death of sinners, but the conversion. I dare to think that if God was to work miracles, they would be to save and not to kill mankind—they would be to correct and not to destroy man. I believe that he is a God of mercy, and not a tyrannical homicide. That which hurts me most in this history, is, that Peter, having slain Ananias, and seeing Saphira his wife coming, does not warn her of her danger; he does not say to her, beware not to conceal and reserve any part of the money; if you have concealed any, produce it; give it to me all; take warning from the death of your husband. On the contrary, he made her fall into his snare, and it appears to me that he rejoiced on striking his second victim. I own to you that this adventure hath constantly made me lay
down

down the book, and the only consolation, that I have, is, in believing it to be impossible and ridiculous.

As you permit me to relate to you my opinions, I continue, and must inform you that I have not found one trace of Christianity in the history of Jesus. The four evangelists that are extant contradict one another in many facts, but they agree in saying that Jesus was submissive to the law of Moses, from the moment of his birth to that of his death; all his disciples frequented the synagogue. They preached reformation, but they announced not any different religion. The Christians were not absolutely separated from the Jews till a long time after. In what precise moment, therefore, does God incline that his people should cease to be Jews, and begin to be Christians? who does not perceive that time hath done every thing, and that all the dogmas have come one after another?

If Jesus had wished to establish a Christian church, would he not have published the laws? would he not himself have established all the rites? would he not have appointed the seven sacraments, of which he says not a word? would he not have said, "I am God, "engendered and not created, the holy spirit proceeds "from my father without being engendered—I have "two wills and one person—my mother is the mother "of God!" On the contrary he says to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" He establishes neither dogma rite nor hierarchy. This is not the way of establishing a religion.

When the first dogmas began to be established, I see the Christians supported them on the authority of supposed books; they imputed to the Sybils the acrostick verses on Christianity; they forged histories, and prodigies of the most palpable absurdity. Such is, for example, the history of the new city of Jerusalem built in the air, the walls of which were five hundred leagues in circumference and height, and which rose above the horizon during the night, but disappeared altogether in the day. Such is the quarrel of Peter and Simon the

magician, before Nero. And such in short are a hundred stories not less absurd.

What puerile miracles did they not forge? what false martyrs? what ridiculous legends—Portenta Judaica rides.

How could he who wrote the legend of Luke under the name of good tidings, have the effrontery to say in the twenty-first chapter, that before the generation, in which he lived, should pass away,—“the foundations of Heaven would be shaken; that there would be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and that Jesus would come in the clouds, in power and in great majesty?” Certainly there was no sign either in the sun, in the moon, or in the stars; neither were the foundations of Heaven moved, nor did Jesus come majestically in the clouds.

The fanatic who compiled the epistles of Paul, is as rash in making him say, “I have learned from Jesus that we who live are reserved for his coming; as soon as the signal shall be made with the trumpet, those who are dead in Jesus, shall arise the first, while we who are alive, will be borne on high with them to go before Jesus.”

Is this fine prediction accomplished? are Paul, and the Christian-Jews gone aloft in the air before Jesus on the sound of the trumpet; and where, if you please, did Paul learn of Jesus, these marvellous things—he who had never seen him—he who had served as a goaler and an executioner against his disciples—he who had assisted to stone St. Stephen? had he spoken to Jesus after he ascended to the third Heaven? and what is the third Heaven? Is it the Heaven of Mercury or Mars? In truth if we read this book with attention, we are seized with horror and pity at every page.

THE CALOYERIAN.

But if this book has such an effect on its readers, how can they believe in this book? how hath it converted so many thousands of men?

THE

THE HONEST MAN.

It is because they have not read it. Is it by the reading of the book that they persuade ten millions of peasants that three are one—that God is contained in a morsel of paste—that this paste disappears, and that it is God himself who is brought on the spot by a man? No: it is by conversation—by preaching—by cabals—and by seducing women and infants. It is by their deceptions, and their miraculous recitals, that they easily bring together and establish a little flock. The books of the primitive Christians were very rare—they were imparted only to the Catechumens—they were initiated secretly into the mysteries of Christians as into those of Ceres. Low people run with avidity after the teachers who persuaded them, not only, that all men were equal, but that a Christian was much superior to a Roman emperor.

All the earth was then divided into little associations, Egyptians, Greeks, Syrians, Romans, Jews, &c. the sect of Christians had all possible advantages among the populace: it required no more than three or four warmed heads, like Paul's, to draw all the mob. Soon after came men of cunning, who placed themselves at the head of the parties. Almost all the sects were thus established, except that of Mahomet, the most remarkable of all, which alone, among all human establishments seems to have been born under the protection of the deity, although it owes its existence but to victories.

Therefore the Mussulman's religion after eleven hundred years, is the same that it was beneath its founder, it has undergone no change. The laws written by Mahomet himself subsist in all their purity. His Alcoran is as much respected in Persia, as it is in Turkey; as much in Africa, as in the Indies, we observe it even to a letter: it is not divided but on the right of succession of Ali and Omar. Christianity, on the contrary, is different in all its parts from the religion of Jesus. This Jesus, son of a village-carpenter, never wrote any thing,

and probably he could neither read nor write. He was born, lived, and died a Jew; in the observance of all the Jewish rites, circumcised, and sacrificing often agreeable to the Mosaical law, eating the paschal lamb with herbs, abstaining from pork, ixion, and griffin, as also from hares, because they ruminate, and have not cloven feet, agreeable to the Mosaic law. You on the contrary dare to believe, that the hare has cloven feet, and that it does not ruminate, and therefore you eat them heartily. You roast an ixion or a griffin whenever you find them. You are not circumcised, you do not make sacrifices, not one of your feasts was instituted by your Jesus. What can you have then in common with him?

THE CALOYERIAN.

I own that I should be an impudent impostor if I should dare to support, in opposition to you, that the Christianity of the present day, resembled that of the primitive ages, or that that of the primitive ages resembled the religion of Jesus. But you will confess with me that God hath ordained all these variations.

THE HONEST MAN.

What! God vary! God change! the idea appears to me, to be blasphemous. The son of God is always the same, and shall his religion be a chain of vicissitudes? what! would you force a resemblance between him and those miserable governments which are daily giving out new and contradictory edicts! then he would have given one edict to Adam; another to Seth; a third to Noah; a fourth to Abraham; a fifth to Moses; a sixth to Jesus; and new edicts also to every council. All would be change, from the defence of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and ill, to the bull of *Unigenitus* of the Jesuit le Tellier. Believe this, and tremble at accusing God of so much inconstancy, weakness, absurdity, and even wickedness.

THE CALOYERIAN.

If all these variations are the work of men, you will agree that the morality at least, is derived from God, since it is constantly the same.

THE HONEST MAN.

Let us then hold to this morality; but even that, the Christians have corrupted. They have cruelly violated the law of nature, published by all the lawgivers, and engraved on the heart of every man.

If Jesus had spoken only of this law, as ancient as the world—of this law established among the Hurons as well as with the Chinese, “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” The law of the Christians would have been, “Detest thy neighbour as thyself.” The Athanasians persecuted the Eusebians and were persecuted. The Cyrillians dashed out the brains of the children of the Nestorians against the walls. The Guelphs and Gibelins made a civil war of five hundred years standing for the purpose of determining whether Jesus had empowered his pretended successor, Simon Baronius, to dethrone emperors and kings, and whether Constantine had ceded the empire to pope Silvester. Papists hung on high gibbets with thirty feet, tore, and burnt the unhappy wretches who did not believe that a morsel of paste could be changed into God, with the voice of a capuchin or a friar, to be eaten on the altar by the mice, if the pix should happen to be left open. Poltrot! Ballazar! Gerard! Jacques! Clement! Chatel! Guignard! Ravailac! sharpen your sacred poignards, charge your holy pistols, Europe! and swim in blood! as the vicar of God, Alexander VI. wallowed in deaths and poisonings in the arms of his daughter Lucrece—as Leo X. swam in pleasures—as Paul III. enriched his bastard with the spoils of nations—as Julius III. made his ape bearer a cardinal (a dignity more proper for the ape than the porter)—as Pius IV. caused the cardinal Caraffe to be strangled—as Pius V. made the Romans groan under the rapines of his bastard Buon-Compagno—as

Clement VII. gave the lash to the great Henry IV. by proxy on the buttocks of the Cardinals d'Assat and du Perron—Mingle together the absurdity of your Italian forces with the horrors of your robberies, and you may send brother Trigaut, and brother Bouvet to preach the good tidings in China.

THE CALOYERIAN.

I cannot condemn your zeal. Truth against which they combat in vain, forces me to agree with part of what you have said; but at the same time, I hope you will agree that with so many crimes they have some great virtues. The abuses of religion must naturally exasperate you; can the good laws of it affect you in the same manner? add to these good laws the miracles which are the proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

THE HONEST MAN.

The miracles! just Heaven! and what religion, pray, has not its miracles? all is prodigy and miracle in antiquity. What! do you not believe in the miracles related by Herodotus and Titus Livius, and a hundred other respectable authors of all nations, and yet give credit to the adventures of the Palestine, related, say they, by John and Mark, in the nonsensical books published for three hundred years among the Greeks and Romans—books written, without doubt, a long time after the destruction of Jerusalem, as is proved in the books themselves which swarm with contradictions in every page? For example, it is said in the Evangelist St. Matthew, that the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barac, which was spilt between the temple and the altar, should return upon the Jews; but we see in the history of Flavius Josephus, that this Zacharias was slain far from the temple and the altar, during the siege of Jerusalem, by Titus. And why did God work these miracles? to be condemned to the gibbet by the Jews? What? by raising up the dead, did he gather no other fruit, than to die himself, and to die too in the greatest torment? If he had wrought these prodigies, he would have done so to make known his divinity. Do you think

think that you do not accuse and censure God for becoming an useless man, and for raising the dead that he might himself be hanged? What! thousands of miracles in favour of the Jews, to render the Jews slaves; and miracles performed by Jesus to make Jesus die on the cross! there is the greatest weakness in believing them, and the most criminal madness in publishing what we do not believe.

THE CALOVERIAN.

I do not deny that your objections are well founded; and I think that you reason with great truth: but, in fine, you will agree that there must be religion among men.

THE HONEST MAN.

Without doubt. The soul demands this nourishment; but why should we have varieties of poison? why should we bury simple truth beneath a mass of ridiculous lies? why strive to maintain those lies by fire and sword? what infernal horror! ah! if your religion was the religion of God, you would not wish to support it by executioners. Hath the Geometrician need to say, believe, or I will kill you! Religion between God and man is adoration and virtue; between the prince and his people it is a matter of policy; and alas! it is but too frequently between man and man but a commerce of fraud. Let us adore God sincerely, and simply, and let us not cheat any man. Yes, we must have religion; but it must be a pure, reasonable and universal religion: it ought to be like the sun, which shines for all men, and not for any little privileged province. It is absurd, odious and abominable, to imagine that God should open all eyes, and yet plunge almost all souls into darkness. There is but one truth common to all the universe, and there ought to be therefore but one religion; and what is it? you know it—it is to adore God, and act justly.

THE CALOYERIAN.

But how do you believe then that my religion was established?

THE HONEST MAN.

As all others have been. A man of a strong imagination induced a number of men of weak imaginations to follow him. The flock increased, fanaticism begun and fraud finished the attempt. A powerful man came—he saw a crowd who had placed saddles on their backs and bridles in their mouths; he mounted on, rode and conducted them. When religion is new it is received without suspicion: the government is not careful to prevent the means of its establishment. They begin with secret assemblies, and they are protected. The first Apostles were expressly sent out to drive away devils; they encouraged the devils. The Apostles collected money from their proselytes, and he who is convicted, besides themselves, of taking money is punished. They say that it must be better to obey God than men, and under this pretext they brave the laws. Governments pretend that to submit to the laws is to obey God. In fine, policy strives without ceasing to conciliate received error with public good.

THE CALOYERIAN.

But go into Europe, and you will be obliged to conform to some one of the received forms of worship.

THE HONEST MAN.

Wherefore? why may I not conduct myself in Europe, as I do here, in adoring peaceably the creator of the universe, the God of all men, him who hath placed in my bosom the love of truth and justice?

THE CALOYERIAN.

No: you would run too great a hazard. Europe is divided into factions, and you must needs chuse one.

THE

THE HONEST MAN.

Factions! what! when they are in search of universal truth! when they seek the deity!

THE CALOYERIAN.

Such is the misfortune of man. We are obliged to do, as mankind does, or fly from society. I therefore desire you to give preference to the Greek church.

THE HONEST MAN.

She is a slave.

THE CALOYERIAN.

Will you submit to the church of Rome?

THE HONEST MAN.

She is a tyrant. I would wish neither for a simoniacal patriarch, who assumes to himself the shameful dignity of a grand vizir, nor for a priest who has been believed to be, for seven hundred years, the master of kings.

THE CALOYERIAN.

It does not belong to a religious man, such as I am, to propose to you the protestant religion.

THE HONEST MAN.

It is perhaps that of all others which I would adopt the most willingly, if I were reduced to the miserable necessity of entering into any one sect.

THE CALOYERIAN.

Why would you not prefer a religion more ancient?

THE HONEST MAN.

It appears to me to be more ancient than the Romish religion.

THE CALOYERIAN.

How? can you suppose that St. Peter is not more ancient than Luther, Zuingli, Æcolampade, Calvin, and the reformers of England, Sweden, Denmark, &c?

THE

THE HONEST MAN.

It appears to me that the protestant Religion was not invented either by Luther or Zuingle. It appears to me that there is more reproach in the source of the Roman religion, than in that which hath adopted what she expressly found in the evangelists of the Christians. In so much as the Papists have loaded their worship with ceremonies, and with new dogmas. We need only to open our eyes, to see that the Christian lawgiver neither instituted feasts, nor appointed the adoration of images, nor of the bones of the dead—that he sold no indulgencies—that he received no first fruits—that he conferred no benefices—that he had not any one temporal dignity—that he established no inquisition for the support of his laws—and that he maintained not his authority by the sword and the gibbet. The Protestants correct all these scandalous and unhappy innovations: they are above all, submissive to political magistracy, while the church of Rome, for eight hundred years, hath wrestled with all state authority. If the Protestants deceive themselves, as well as others, in the principles of their religion, they have at least fewer errors in the consequences; and if I must traffick with men I would chuse to deal with those who cheat the least.

THE CALOYERIAN.

It appears that you would chuse your religion, as you would buy goods at a market; you would purchase from him who sold the cheapest.

THE HONEST MAN.

I have told you that which I would prefer, if I were obliged to make a choice by the rules of human prudence. But it is not to man that I ought to address myself—it is to God alone. He speaks to all our hearts, and we have an equal right to understand him. The conscience which he hath given to all men is their universal law. Men believe, from the one pole to the other, that they ought to be just—that they ought to honour their

their fathers and mothers, to assist their equals, and to keep their promises; these are the laws of God, ceremonies and modes are the laws of men. All religions differ as well as all governments. God tolerates both the one and the other. I believe that the external manner in which we adore the deity, can neither flatter nor offend him, provided this adoration is not superstitious towards himself, nor barbarous towards men.

Is it not an offence to God, to think that he should chuse a little pitiful nation, charged with every crime, for his favourites, and should damn all others—that the assassin of Uriah should be his well-beloved; but that he should hold the pious Antoninus in horror? Is it not the greatest absurdity to think that the supreme Being will ever punish a Caloyerian for eating a hare, or a Turk for eating pork? There have been people, they say, who have placed onions in a rank with the Gods. There have been others who have pretended that morsels of paste were changed into, and partook as much of God as they did of crumbs. These two extremes of human weakness or fraud are equally to be pitied. But that those who have adopted these reveries should have dared to persecute those who did not believe them, is horrid. The ancient Parses, the Sabeans, the Egyptians, the Greeks have admitted a hell; this hell is upon earth, and these persecutors are the demons.

THE CALOYERIAN.

I detest persecution and constraint as much as you, and thank Heaven, the Turks under whom I live in peace, persecute no man.

THE HONEST MAN.

Ah! may all the people of Europe follow the example of the Turks!

THE CALOYERIAN.

But I must add, that being a Caloyerian, I can propose to you no other religion than that which I profess at Mount Athos.

THE

THE HONEST MAN.

And I—I, for my part, must add, that being a man I propose to you the religion which agrees with all men—that of all the patriarchs and sages of antiquity—the adoration of God—justice—the love of your neighbour—indulgence for every error—and good will on all occasions of life. This is a religion worthy of God, and that God hath engraved on all our hearts. But be assured he has not engraved there that three are one, that a morsel of bread is the eternal, and that Balaam's ass spoke.

THE CALOYERIAN.

Do not hesitate to become a Caloyerian.

THE HONEST MAN.

Do not hesitate to become an honest man.

THE CALOYERIAN.

I serve God agreeable to the custom of my convent.

THE HONEST MAN.

And I agreeable to my conscience; which tells me to fear him, to love the Caloyerians, the Dervices, the Bonzes, the Telapoints, and to regard all men as my brethren.

THE CALOYERIAN.

Go, go, Caloyerian, tho' I am, I think as you do.

THE HONEST MAN.

May God bless this good Caloyerian!

THE CALOYERIAN.

May God bless this honest man!

A
DIALOGUE
BETWEEN
A DOUBTFUL MAN AND AN ADORER.

B Y
M. L'ABBE DE TILLADET.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

HOW can you prove to me the existence of a God?

THE ADORER.

As I would prove to you the existence of the sun, by opening the eyes.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

You believe then in final causes?

THE ADORER.

I believe in an admirable cause when I see admirable effects produced. May God grant that I never resemble the fool who said that the clock did not prove to him that there was a clock-maker! that a house did not prove to him that there was an architect, and that it was not possible to demonstrate the existence of God, but by a clear proposition of Algebra. Therefore he was erroneous.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

What is your religion?

THE

THE ADORER.

It is not only that of Socrates, who laughed at the fables of the Greeks, but also that of Jesus who confounded the Pharisees.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

If you are of the religion of Jesus, why are you not a Jesuit, since they possess a district of country in Paraguay, three hundred miles in length and breadth? Why do you not believe in the Premonstratenses, and in the benedictines, to whom Jesus hath given so many rich abbeys?

THE ADORER.

Jesus neither instituted Benedictines, Premonstratenses, nor Jesuits.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

Do you think you can serve God, while you eat mutton on Friday, and do not go to mass?

THE ADORER.

I believe firmly that I can, in so much as Jesus never said mass, and as he ate flesh both on Friday and Saturday.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

You think then that they have corrupted the simple and natural religion of Jesus, which was evidently that of all the wise men of antiquity?

THE ADORER.

Nothing appears more certain. He must have been at the bottom, a man of wisdom since he declaimed against impostors of priests and against superstition, but they impute to him things that a wise man could neither have done, nor said: a wise man could not have looked for figs at the beginning of March on a fig-tree, and destroyed it because he found no figs. A wise man would not have changed water into wine in favour of men already drunk. A wise man could not have expelled the devils from the bodies of two thousand swine in

in a country where there were no swine. A wise man could not have transfigured himself during the night, for the purpose of having a white raiment. A wise man could not be transported by the devil. A wise man when he says that God is his father, means, without doubt, that God is the father of all men : the sense in which he wishes us to understand it, is impious and blasphemous.

It appears that the words and actions of this wise man, have been very badly collected; and that in the many histories of his life written ninety years after him, they have chosen the most improbable, because they believed them to be the most important for fools. Every writer piques himself on rendering his history marvellous; every little Christian society hath its particular evangelist. This is the plain reason why those evangelists do not agree almost in any one point. If you believe in one evangelist, you are obliged to renounce all the others. We see, as a pleasant evidence of truth, perpetual contradiction; and, as a mark of wisdom, contending absurdities.

It is therefore evident that fanatics at the very beginning, deluded simple men, and that those who followed have continued the deception. The latter have improved upon the former. The true history of Jesus is probably that of a just man who reprov'd the vices of the Pharisees, and whom the Pharisees persecuted to death. They made him afterwards a prophet, and at the end of three hundred years, they made him a God. Such is the progress of the human mind.

It is acknowledged even by the most infatuated bigots, that the primitive Christians employed the most shameful frauds to support their new-born sect. All the world agree that they forged false predictions, false histories, and false miracles. Fanatism extended itself on all sides, and in the countries where it had dominion, what was established by imposture and falsehood, was supported by torture and fear. Every age hath thus corrupted the religion of Jesus, so that that of Christianity is altogether different.

If

If it was said by Jesus that his kingdom was not of this world: those who pretend to be his successors, do not agree with him; in so much as they have been the tyrants of the earth, and have set themselves at the head of kings—If Jesus lived poor, his strange successors have ravished from us our possessions and the fruits of our labour.

Consider the feasts which Jesus observed, they were all Jewish, and now we burn those that celebrate the Jewish festivals. Did Jesus say that he had in himself two natures? No: and yet we give him two natures. Did Jesus say that Mary was the mother of God? No: and yet we make her the mother of God. Did Jesus say that he was trine and consubstantial? No: and yet we have made him consubstantial and trine. Shew me one rite that you observe precisely as he did—tell me one of your dogmas which was exactly his. I defy you.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

But, Sir, in speaking thus, you are no Christian.

THE ADORER.

I am a Christian as Jesus was, whose celestial doctrine they have changed into an infernal one. If he had been merely considered as a just man, they would have called him a fool, who ran up and down the country of a little Jewish province, comparing the heavens to a grain of mustard.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

What do you think of Paul, the murderer of Stephen, the persecutor of the primitive Galileans, and afterwards a Galilean, and persecuted himself? Why did he quarrel with Gamaliel his master? was it, as some of the Jewish writers say, because Gamaliel refused him his daughter in marriage? or was it because he had crooked legs, a bald head, and eye-brows that were joined together, as is reported in the Acts of St. Tecla. his favourite? did he in fine write the epistles which are given us under his name?

THE ADORER.

It is very well known that Paul is not the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which it is said, "Jesus is exalted as much above the angels, as the name which he hath received is more excellent than theirs."

And in another place it is said, "that God hath made him for some time inferior to the angels."

At the same time in his other epistles, he speaks almost always of Jesus, as of a simple man, cherished by God, and advanced to glory.

One while he says, "that women may pray, speak, preach, and prophesy, provided they have their heads covered, for a woman without a veil, dishonours her head."

Another while he says, "that women ought not to speak at all in the church."

He quarrelled with Peter, "because Peter had not judaized with the Gentiles, but had judaized with Jews." But this Paul himself went to judaize for eight days, in the temple of Jerusalem, and brought thither Gentiles to prove that he was no Christian. He is accused of having ransacked the temple—the high priest gave him a box on the ear—he was taken before the Roman Tribune, and to procure his enlargement he makes two impudent lies to the Tribune and to the Sanhedrim. He says to them—"I am a Pharisee, son to a Pharisee;" when at the same time he was a Christian: he adds, "They persecute me because I believe in the resurrection of the dead." This had not been the question, and by this lie, so easily invented, he meant to bring together by the ears, and divide the judges of the Sanhedrim, one half of whom believed in the resurrection of the dead, and the other half not.

He is in truth a most singular Apostle. He is the man also who dared to say, "that he had been exalted to the third Heaven, and that he had heard words which he was not at liberty to relate."

The voyage of Astolphus to the moon is more probable, because the journey is not so long. But why would he have wished to impose a belief on the weak men to whom he wrote, that he had been exalted to the third Heaven? was it for the purpose of establishing his credit among them? was it to satisfy his ambition of being the chief of a party? was it to give weight to his insolent and tyrannical words? "If I come once more among you, I will not pardon those who have sinned, nor all those even who have not sinned."

It is easy to see in the balderdash of Paul that he still preserved his original spirit of persecution; a frightful spirit that made but too many proselytes. I know that he commanded none but beggars; but it is the passion of man to elevate himself above his equals, and to wish to oppress them. It is the passion of a tyrant. Why? Paul, thou Jew—thou tent-maker—didst thou dare to write to the Corinthians that thou wouldst punish even those who had not sinned? Nero, Attila, Pope Alexander VI. never made use of such abominable words. If Paul wrote thus, he merited exemplary punishment—if impostors have forged these epistles, they deserve still severer.

Alas! it is thus that the greatest part of the popular sects commenced. An impostor harrangued the dregs of the people in a barn, and the impostors who succeeded to him, quickly inhabited palaces.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

You have but too much reason. But now that you have told me what you think of this fanatic, half Jew and half Christian, named Paul, pray inform me what you think of the ancient Jews.

THE ADORER.

That which the thinking men of all nations think of them, and what the reasonable Jews think of themselves.

THE

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

You do not think that the God of all nature abandoned and proscribed the rest of mankind, to make himself the king of a miserable little nation? you do not believe that a serpent spoke to a woman? that God planted a tree, the fruit of which gave the knowledge of good and ill? that God prohibited man and woman from eating of this fruit; which he ought rather to have presented to them, to give them the knowledge of this good and evil, a knowledge absolutely necessary to humankind? you do not believe that he conducted his cherished people into the deserts, and that he was obliged to preserve for forty years, their old sandals, and their old raiment? you will hardly believe that he wrought miracles, which were equalled however by those of the magic of Pharaoh; that his beloved people might pass through the sea with dry feet like thieves and cowards, and that he might draw them miserably from Egypt, instead of settling them in that fertile country?

You do not believe that he ordained his people to massacre all those with whom they met, in order to render his people almost always the slaves of other nations? you do not believe that Balaam's ass spoke? you do not believe that Sampson tied three hundred foxes together by the tails? you do not believe that the inhabitants of Sodom were inclined to violate two angels? you do not believe - - - - -

THE ADORER.

No, certainly I do not believe these impertinent fictions, so disgraceful to the human mind. I believe that the Jews had their fables as well as all other nations, but fables much more foolish, and absurd, in so much as they were the rudest nation of all the Asiatics, as the Thebans were the most uncultivated of all the Greeks.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

I own that the Jewish religion was absurd and abominable; but Jesus whom you love was a Jew, he fulfilled

filled in all respects the Jewish law, and observed all its ceremonies.

THE ADORER.

This then is a great contradiction, that he should himself be a Jew, and his disciples not be so. I adopt no part of his doctrine but his morality, which is altogether uniform. I cannot bear the expression, "I am" "not come to bring peace but a sword." These words are horrid. A wise man, I say once again, could not have compared the Heavens to a grain of mustard—to a wedding—to money that was gathered from usury.—These words are ridiculous. I adopt this sentence—"Love God and your neighbour."—It is the eternal law of all men—it is mine—it is thus that I am the friend of Jesus—it is thus that I am a Christian. If he was an adorer of God, an enemy to false priesthood, and persecuted by cheats. I unite myself with him—I am his brother.

THE DOUBTFUL MAN.

There has never been a father of a religion that has not said as much as Jesus, and who has not like him recommended virtue.

THE ADORER.

And therefore I am of the religion of all men, of that of Socrates, of Plato, of Aristides, of Cicero, of Cato, of Titus, of Trajan, of Antoninus, of Marcus-Aurelius, of Epictetus, and of Jesus.

I say with Epictetus—"God hath created me—God is above me—I hold him to be above all. Wherefore should I outrage him by attributing to him obscene thoughts, low actions, and infamous desires? I unite in myself, qualities every one of which imposes a duty upon me. Man, citizen of the world, son of God, brother of all men, son, husband, father; I am called by all these names, and may I not dishonour one of them!

"My duty is to praise God in all things, to thank him for all, and not to cease to adore him till I cease to live."

A hun-

A hundred maxims of this kind are worth more than the sermon on the mount, or this fine expression, "Blest are the poor in spirit." I will therefore adore God, not the frauds of man. I will serve God, and not a council of Chalcedonia, nor a council *in trullo*. I will detest infamous superstition, and I will sincerely attach myself to true religion to the last gasp of my life.

T H E
H O M I L Y
O F
THE REVEREND MR. BOURN.

PREACHED AT LONDON ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST,
MDCCLXVIII.

BEHOLD the first day, my brethren, whereon the doctrine and the morality of Jesus was manifested by his disciples. You would not attend to me were I to explain to you how the spirit descended upon them in tongues of fire. So many miracles have preceded this prodigy, that we cannot deny one of them, without denying them all. Others waste their time in trying to discover why Peter, who spoke, in an instant, all the languages of the known world, should yet be under the necessity of employing Mark to be his interpreter. They distress themselves to find the reason why the miracle of Pentecost was wrought—why that of the resurrection; and they are all of them ignorant why, of all the nations that were then at Jerusalem, not one profane author, either Greek, Roman, or Jew, hath spoken of these events, which were so amazing and so public, that they ought for a long time to have en-

gaged the attention of the astonished world. In truth, say they, it is an incomprehensible miracle that Jesus, recovered from the dead, should ascend slowly to Heaven, in a cloud, in the sight of all the Romans, who were then in Jerusalem; and that not one Roman should make the least mention of this ascension, though it ought to have made more noise than the murder of Cæsar, the battles of Pharsalia and Actium, or the deaths of Anthony and Cleopatra. By what providence did God shut the eyes of all men, that they could perceive nothing of what ought to have been seen by a million of spectators? How did God permit the recitals of the Christians to be so obscure, and unknown for more than two hundred years, although these prodigies, of which alone they speak, had been so public? Why was not the name even of Evangelist known to any Greek or Roman author? All these questions which have given rise to so many volumes have turned us from our aim, that of studying the doctrine, and the morality of Jesus, which ought to be ours.

What is the doctrine preached on the day of Pentecost?

That God hath glorified Jesus, and hath approved of him. *

That he hath been sacrificed. †

That he hath arisen from the dead, and hath ascended from hell—that is to say, if you please, from a vault. ‡

That he was raised by the power of God, and that God afterwards sent him his spirit. §

It is thus that Peter hath explained it to an hundred thousand obstinate Jews, and by which he converted eight thousand of them in two sermons, while we have not been able to convert eight of those that remain, in more than a thousand years.

It is therefore incontestible, my brethren, that the first time that the apostles spoke of Jesus, they spoke of

* Acts, ch. ii. ver. 22.—† Ver. 23.—‡ Ver. 24.—§ Ver. 32,

him, as the envoy of God, sacrificed by men, raised by grace before God, and glorified by God himself. St. Paul never spoke otherways. Behold then, without contradiction, the doctrine of primitive Christianity, of true Christianity. You will not find, as I have told you before in my other discourses, either in any of the Evangelists, or in the Acts of the Apostles, that Jesus had two natures and two wills; that Mary was the mother of God; that the holy spirit proceeded from the father and the son; that Jesus established seven sacraments; that he appointed the adoration of images and relicks. All this huge mass of controversy was entirely unknown. It is clear that the primitive Christians confined themselves to adore God through Jesus—to exorcise the possessed through Jesus—to expel devils through Jesus—and to cure the sick through Jesus.

We do not expel devils, my brethren; we do not cure all mortal diseases, unless we are physicians; none of us can open the eyes of the blind but Mr. Taylor; but we adore God—we bless him—we follow the law which he hath given to us by the mouth of Jesus in Galilee. This law is simple because it is divine, “You shall love God and your neighbour.” Jesus never recommended any other thing: these few words comprehend all; they are so divine that all the nations have understood them in all times, and had them engraven on their hearts. Passions the most conflicting could never efface them. Zoroaster among the Persians, Thaut among the Egyptians, Brama among the Indians, Orpheus among the Greeks, exclaimed to all men, “Love God and your neighbour.” This law observed makes the whole happiness of the earth.

Jesus hath not told you, “The devil driven from Heaven and plunged into hell, departed from thence in spite of God, to disguise himself in the form of a serpent, in order to come and persuade a woman to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The children of this woman have consequently been guilty from their birth of the most horrible crime, and are condemned to eternal flames, while their

“ bodies are to corrupt upon earth. I am come to rescue from the flames those who are born after me, and yet I will rescue none but those to whom I will give an efficient grace, which too of itself without me, will not be efficient.” This dreadful nonsense, my brethren, you will not happily find in any one Evangelist, but you will find in them all, that “ we must love God and our neighbour.”

When all the tongues of fire, which descended into the garret where the disciples then were, had spoken—When the disciples also descended to speak, they could not pronounce a doctrine more humane, or at the same time more celestial, than this.

Jesus adored God and loved his neighbour in Galilee, let us also adore God and love our neighbour in London.

The Jews tell us, “ Jesus was a Jew, he was presented at the temple as a Jew ; circumcised as a Jew ; baptised as a Jew by John, who was himself a Jew, and who baptized the Jews according to the ancient Jewish rite ; and by an act of Jewish superogation, he paid the Jewish korban ; he went to the Jewish temple ; he constantly judaized ; he fulfilled all the Jewish ceremonies. If he loaded the Jewish priests with injuries, because they were wicked prevaricators full of pride and avarice, he was so much the better Jew. If the vengeance of the priests brought him to death, he yet died a Jew. O Christians ! be you then Jews.”

I answer the Jews : my friends (for all nations are our friends) Jesus was more than a Jew : he was a man—he embraced all men in charity. Your mosaic law knew no other neighbour for a Jew but another Jew. It was not permitted for you even to make use of the utensils of a stranger ; you were rendered unclean, if you boiled a loin of veal in a Roman kettle ; you could not serve yourselves with a fork or a spoon that belonged to a Roman citizen ; and supposing that you ever served yourselves with a fork at table, of which I find no account in history, the fork must necessarily be Jewish.

Jewish. It is certain, at least according to yourselves, that you stole the dishes, knives, forks, and spoons of the Egyptians, when you fled from Egypt like cheats, but your law did not make you restore them. Of what kind was your law? It ordered you to exterminate all nations, and not to reserve any but the young women for your own use; you overthrew walls with the sound of trumpets; you made the sun and the moon stand still, for the purpose of cutting throats. And this is the manner in which you love your neighbour!

It was not thus that Jesus recommended this love. See the excellent parable of the Samaritan: a Jew is robbed and wounded by other Jews; he is left naked on the way side bleeding and half dead. An orthodox priest passes; he observes him and pursues his journey without giving him any assistance: another orthodox priest passes and follows the same severity. A poor lay Samaritan comes, an heretic: he dresses his wounds, transports him to a place of ease, and orders him to be properly attended. The two priests are barbarians; the secular and charitable heretic is a man of God. This is the doctrine, this is the morality, this is the religion of Jesus.

Our adversaries tell us that Luke, who was a layman, and who wrote the last of all the evangelists, is the only one who hath related this parable; that none of the others have mentioned it; that on the contrary St. Matthew says that Jesus recommended * it expressly not to publish any thing to the Samaritans and Gentiles; that his love for his neighbour extended no further than the tribe of Judah, that of Levi, and half the tribe of Benjamin, and that he loved not the rest of mankind. If he had loved his neighbour, add they, he would not have said, that he was come to bring a sword and not peace; that he was come to divide the father and the son, the husband and the wife, and to make discord in families. He would not have pronounced the unhappy "Let them not enter," which

* Matthew, chap. 10, ver. 5.

has been so much abused. He would not have deprived a foreign merchant of the price of two thousand swine, which was a considerable sum, and would not have driven the devil from the bodies of these swine, to destroy them in the lake of Genezareth. He would not have dried up the fig-tree of a poor man for not bearing figs when it was not fig-time. He would not have published in his parables that a master acted justly in putting his servant to the sword, for not having, by usury, made a profit on the money he entrusted to him, of five hundred per cent.

The enemies of christianity continue their objections by saying, that the apostles were more uncharitable than their master; that their first endeavour constantly was to collect all the money of the believers, and that Peter struck Ananias and his wife dead for not having yielded up the whole. If Peter, say they, slew them from his own particular authority, in revenge for the deception, he deserved to be publicly broken on the wheel. If Peter prayed God to slay them, he merited a punishment from the hand of God. If God, alone, ordered their death, happy is it for the world that he rarely pronounces these terrible judgments which deter us from every act of charity.

I pass over in silence all the objections of the incredulous, on the morality and the doctrine of Jesus, as well as on all the events of his life, which are so variously reported. It would require twenty volumes to refute all that they object to, and a religion which stands in need of so much apology cannot be the true religion. It ought to enter into the hearts of men, as light enters into the eyes, without effort, without pain, and without permitting us to entertain the least doubt of its clearness. I am not come here for the purpose of disputation. I am come to endeavour to edify you as well as myself.

Let others seize what they can find in the evangelists, in the Acts of the Apostles, or in Paul's Epistles, contrary to common notions, to the light of reason, or to the ordinary rules of common sense. I leave them

to triumph in the miracles which appear unnecessary, to their feeble understandings, such as the water changed into wine at the marriage in favour of the guests already drunk; that of the transfiguration; that of the devil, who carried the son of God up to a high mountain, and discovered to him all the kingdoms of the earth; that of the fig-tree; that of the two thousand swine. I leave them to exercise their criticism on the parables which insult their understandings, on the prediction made by Jesus in the twenty-first of St. Luke, "That he should come in the clouds with power and with great majesty before the generation, to which he spoke, was passed away." There is not a page which has not produced disputes. I will hold to that therefore which has never been disputed; to that, which has always carried with it the consent of every man, before Jesus, and after Jesus; to that which was confirmed by his mouth, and which no person has denied, "that we must love God and our neighbour."

If the scripture sometimes offers to the soul a nourishment which the greatest part of mankind cannot digest, let us nourish ourselves at least with that salubrious aliment which she presents to all the world, "let us love God and our neighbour." Let us fly from all disputes, the first chapter of Genesis startled the Jews themselves; it was not permitted to them to read it before they were five and twenty years old: the prophecies of Ezekiel were esteemed scandalous, and the reading of them was prohibited likewise; the song of songs was said to lead young men and women to impurity. Theodore of Mopsuetus, the Rabbies, Grotius, Chatillon, and others, inform us that the Canticles were not allowed to be read, but by those who were on the point of marriage. In fine, my brethren, how many actions are there related in the Jewish books, which it would be abominable to imitate? where is the woman this day who would act like Jahel, who deluded Sisra that she might drive a nail into his head; like Judith who prostituted herself to Holifernes, that she might assassinate him; like Esther, who after having obtained
of

of her husband, that the Jews should massacre five hundred Persians, in Shusham, yet demanded of him three hundred more, beside the seventy-five thousand killed in the provinces; who would imitate the daughters of Lot, who lay with their father? What father of a family would conduct himself like the patriarch Judah, who lay with his daughter-in-law? or like Rubin, who lay with his mother-in-law? who would imitate David, who associated himself with four hundred robbers, drowned, says the scripture, in debauchery and debts, with whom he massacred all the subjects of his ally, Achis, from the infant to the mother, and who at last, having eighteen concubines, ravished Bethsheba, and caused her husband to be killed? There is in scripture, I confess, a thousand singular horrors against which nature revolts. All has not been given us for a rule of manners. Let us hold then to this incontestible, universal, eternal law, on which alone depends the purity of manners in every nation—"Let us love God" and our neighbour."

If I was permitted to speak of the Alcoran in an assembly of Christians, I would say that the Sonnites represent this book as a cherubim with two faces, the one that of an angel, the other that of a beast. Those things which insult even the weak part of mankind, say they, have the visage of a beast, and those which edify, have the face of an angel. Let us edify and leave apart every thing that insults us; for, in a word, my brethren, what does God demand of us? that we should compare Matthew with Luke; that we should reconcile the two genealogies which contradict one another; that we should dispute on certain passages? No: he demands that we shall love him, and act justly. If our fore fathers had done so, the disputes on the English liturgy would not have carried them to cut off the head of Charles the 1st. on a scaffold; the powder plot would never have been contrived; forty thousand families would not have been massacred in Ireland; blood would not have been shed, nor piles of faggots set on fire, in the reign of Queen Mary, nor would other na-
tions

tions have had arguments and contests in divinity; into what a dreadful abyss of crimes and calamities have not religious disputes brought Europe for ages past! The catalogue would be much too long for the limits of my sermon. The monks say that truth has made many profelytes; that one cannot buy it too dear; that it is that which has procured to their holy father so many first fruits, and so much territory; that if we were contented to love God and our neighbour, the Pope would not have been able to seize the dutchies of Urbin, Ferrar, Castro, Bolougne, or even of Rome itself; nor to profess himself Lord Paramount of Naples; that a church which showers so much good on the head of one man, is, no doubt the true church; that we are wrong since we are poor; and that God visibly abandons us.

My brethren, it is perhaps difficult to love those who hold this language; nevertheless, "let us love God" and our neighbour;" but how shall we love the haughty incumbents, who with hearts of pride, avarice, and voluptuousness, crush those who bear the heat and burthen of the day? or how shall we love those who preaching with absurdity, persecute with insolence.

My brethren, it is to love them, undoubtedly, to pray that God would convert them.

F R A G M E N T

O F A

L E T T E R

F R O M

L O R D B O L I N G B R O K E .

A Very great Prince told me, two months ago, at the waters of Aix-la-chapelle, that he would be able to govern most happily a considerable nation without the aid of superstition: "I believe it firmly," answered I, "and an evident proof of the practicability of the scheme is, that the less superstitious that our English church has grown, the more flourishing the kingdom has become. Let us advance a few steps further, and we must be better; but we must have time to remove the cause of the malady, after we have destroyed the principal symptoms.

"Men," says the prince, "are a species of apes, who may be trained, up according to reason, as well as by folly; the latter method has been taken for a long time; it has been proved the wrong method. The barbarian chiefs who conquered our barbarous nations, believed they could at once muzzle the people by means of the priests. These, after having well saddled and whipped the people, set them against their monarchs; they dethroned Louis le Debonnaire, or rather Louis the Sor, for they only dethrone fots; they formed a chaos of absurdities, of fanaticism, of discord, of tyranny, and sedition, which was extended to hundreds of kingdoms. Let us act otherways and we shall have a contrary effect: I
" have

“ have remarked,” adds he, “ that a great number of
 “ the better sort of common people, and even of mecha-
 “ nics pay no more credit to superstitions, than the
 “ confessors of princes or ministers of state. But
 “ from whence does it arrive ? they have sense enough
 “ to see the absurdity of our dogmas, but they are
 “ not sufficiently instructed or wise enough to penetrate
 “ farther ; the God whom they announce say they is
 “ ridiculous, and therefore there is no God. This con-
 “ clusion is as absurd as the dogmas which are preached
 “ to them, and on this precipitate conclusion, they
 “ throw themselves into a crime, which a good natu-
 “ ralist could not be guilty of.

“ Let us propose to them then a God, who shall not
 “ be ridiculous ; who shall not disgrace himself by
 “ old men’s tales, and they will adore him without jest
 “ and without murmur ; they will be afraid of betray-
 “ ing the conscience which this God hath implanted in
 “ their bosoms. They have a stock of reason, and
 “ this reason would not revolt : for in fine, though
 “ there is folly in acknowledging any other but the
 “ sovereign of all nature, it is nothing less than folly
 “ to deny the existence of this sovereign altogether.
 “ Though there are some reasoners whose vanity de-
 “ ceives their judgments, and induces them to deny an
 “ universal intelligence, yet the greatest part of man-
 “ kind, on viewing the stars and organised nature, ac-
 “ knowledge a power that has created the stars, and
 “ given birth to man. An honest man finds himself
 “ much more inclined, and ready to bend before the
 “ Being of beings, than to bend beneath a native either
 “ of Mecca or of Bethlehem. I shall be truly religi-
 “ ous in crushing superstition. My example will have
 “ its influence on the people, and they will have neither
 “ to fear the cruelties and oppressions of priests nor
 “ friars.

“ At the same time I shall have no more to fear
 “ either the insolence of a Gregory VII, the poisons
 “ of an Alexander VI, or the daggers of the Clements,
 “ Ravaillacs, Balthazars, Gerards, and the many other
 “ rascals

“ rascals, armed by fanaticism. Can it be believed that
 “ I shall find it difficult to teach reason to the Germans,
 “ when it has not been found so to the Chinese princes,
 “ to render a pure religion great and flourishing, and
 “ established with the men of learning for more than
 “ five thousand years.”

I answered him that nothing was more reasonable nor more easy, but that he would not be able to accomplish it, because he would be hurried along by other cares when he had reached the throne, and that should he strive to make his subjects reasonable, the neighbouring princes would not fail to arm the ancient folly of his people against him.

“ The Chinese princes,” said I to him, “ had no
 “ neighbouring princes to fear when they instituted a
 “ religion worthy of God and man; they were detached
 “ from all other dominions by inaccessible mountains and deserts. You cannot accomplish this grand
 “ object without having a hundred thousand conquering
 “ warriors under your standard, and even then I
 “ doubt the enterprize. For such a project there must
 “ exist an enthusiasm in philosophy, and philosophy
 “ has rarely enthusiasm. There must be a love of human
 “ nature, and I am afraid you think it does not
 “ deserve to be loved. Be therefore contented with
 “ trampling error beneath your feet, and leave the weak
 “ and the deluded to fall on their knees before it.”

That which I foretold has already come to pass. The fruit is not yet ripe enough to be gathered.

is to come. So that we regard none as the image of God, but those kings who do need to have fellow-creatures.

Melchior must pardon me, therefore, if I cannot acknowledge him to be the image of God. I understand that this man, with whom we have nothing to do, had stated a right principle; but not in the words a public minister, whom he was bound to respect, and had left to our territories, a troop of lawless plunderers, not daring to go into his house.

S E R M O N
O F
FATHER NICHOLAS CHARISTESKI,

**PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. TOLERANSKI,
A VILLAGE OF LITHUANIA, ON THE
DAY OF EPIPHANY.**

MY BRETHREN,

WE celebrate to-day, the feast of the three great kings, Melchior, Balthazar, and Gaspard, who came on foot from the extremities of the east, conducted by a star, and charged with gold, incense, and myrrh, to present to the infant Jesus. Where shall we find, at this day, three kings who travel together in good friendship, under the guidance of a star, and who give their gold to a little child.

While there is any gold in the world, they dispute among themselves, and they drown the earth in blood; to gain the possession of it: afterwards they cause incense to be offered up, by my compatriots, who do not fail to speak of them at the end of their sermons, and say that they are upon earth the images of the living God.

We believe, in my parish at least, that the living God is gentle, and peaceable; that he is equally the father of all men; that he cherishes no evil in the hearts of his creatures; that he has neither formed them to be unhappy in this world, nor to be damned in that which

is to come. So that we regard none as the images of God, but those kings who do good to their fellow-creatures.

Mustapha must pardon me, therefore, if I cannot acknowledge him to be the image of God. I understand that this man, with whom we have nothing to do, hath violated the right of nations; hath put to the sword a public minister, whom he was bound to respect, and hath sent to our territories, a troop of lawless plunderers, not daring to go thither himself.

I never can imagine, my brethren, that God and a cowardly, bloody Turk, resemble one another as much as two drops of water.

But that which astonishes me still more, that which makes the remnant of hair that I have left to stand upright on my head; that which makes me exclaim,—“Heli, Heli, Lamma Sanathani,” or, “Labasanathani;” that which makes me sweat blood, is that which I am about to read in a manifesto of the confederates or conspirators (call them which you please) of Poland. These are the words, (page 5.)

“The sublime Porte our good neighbour and faithful ally, excited by the treaties which bind her to the republic, and by the interest even which attaches her to the preservation of our rights hath taken up arms in our favour. Every thing therefore invites us to combine our forces and oppose the fall of our holy religion.”

Ah, my brethren, in what is this Porte sublime? It is the Porte of the palace built by Constantine, and these barbarians have shed the blood of the last of the Constantines: can we give the epithet of sublime to the wolves who come to cut the throats of all the sheep-fold? These are Christians who speak, and they dare to say, that they have called in the faithful Mahometans against their proper country, against Christians.

Brave Polonese! It was not thus that your great Sabiniski spoke and acted, when in the plains of Choksim he wallowed in the blood of these plunderers, the shame of your nation, to whom you pay tribute; when he saved

saved Vienna from carnage and the sword; when he replaced the Christian emperor on the throne. Surely you cannot, after this, call those enemies of human kind "your good neighbours and your faithful allies."

What is the aim, my dear brethren, of this monstrous alliance with the Turkish Porte? It is to exterminate the Christians, their brethren, who differ from them on some points, and in some customs, and who are not like them the slaves of an Italian bishop.

They call the religion of this Italian, catholic and apostolic, forgetting that we had the name of catholic a long time before them; that the word catholic is a term of our language; that thus all the terms consecrated to Christianity have been published by us; that all their evangelists were Greeks; that all the fathers of the church in the four primitive ages were Greeks; and that in fine the Roman religion, so decried by the half of Europe, is no other, if our spirit of benignity will permit us to say so much, than a bastard, that, after a length of time, hath revolted against her mother.

They call us the dissenters, and properly so; we dissent, we differ from them; insomuch as they suck the blood of the people; as they dare to believe themselves to be superior to kings; as they subject crowns to a triple mitre; as they excommunicate sovereigns; as they put states under interdiction; and as they pretend to dispose of all the kingdoms upon earth.

These frightful extravagancies have never reproached, thank heaven, the true religion of the Greek church. We have had our absurdities, our follies as well as others, my dear brethren, but we have never encouraged nor possessed such horrors.

God hath given to us a king legitimately elected, a wise and a just king, whom we cannot charge with the least prevarication since he came to the throne. The confederates or conspirators persecute him; they wish to deprive him of his crown, and probably of his life,

because they suspect in him, some condescension towards our parish of St. Toleranski.

The august empress of Russia, Catharine II. the heroine of our time, the protectress of the holy catholic Greek church, firmly convinced that the holy spirit proceeds from the father, and not from the son; and that the son hath not paternity, hath shewn to us regards of compassion. This is enough for the Goths of the Latin church, to declare themselves against Catherine II.

They publish in their manifesto of the 4th of July, 1769, (page 241.) "that they oppose to the Russians, " courage and virtue; that the Russians have never " rendered themselves deserving of military fame; that " their army dare not show itself before the army of " the sublime Porte."

We know how Catherine hath replied to these compliments; by beating the Turks wherever her armies could find them; by chasing them out of Moldavia and Walachia altogether; and by taking from them almost all Bassarabia, Asaph, and Taganrok, by making them place arms in the hands of their Tartars; by taking from them their towns on the borders of the Euxine both in Europe and Asia; and, in fine, by sending fleets from the depths of the northern ocean to destroy all the navy of the sublime Porte in the eye of the Dardanelles. The Russians have therefore dared to shew themselves. The god Sabaoth hath fought for them, and he has been powerfully assisted by the Gideons, named Orlof, Romanzow, Gallitzin, Baver, Showalow, Spiritow, and the many others who have rendered St. Nicholas so respectable to Mahometans.

Consider, my hearers, that the powerful hand of Catherine, which hath crushed the Ottoman pride, is the same hand that supports our catholic church; it is that which hath signed, that the first law of her land is toleration. And God, of whom she is in this point, the perfect image, hath showered upon her his benedictions.

She

I She is anointed, my brethren. Why then do the nations dare to meditate the destruction of the Lord's anointed, as, says the Psalmist? It is because there is no longer in Europe a Godfrey of Bouillon, a Scanderbeg, a Matthias Corvin, a Morasini. It is only Russia that now produces such men.

At this day the Latin Christians call the grand Turk their holy father. Great St. Nicholas descend from heaven, where thou makest so grand an appearance, and bring into my parish the standard of Mahomet! Conspirators of Poland go and kiss the hand of Catharine! Nations, do not quarrel more, but admire.

God is my witness that I do not hate the Turks, but I hate pride, ignorance, and cruelty. Our empress hath overcome those three monsters. Let us therefore pray God, and St. Nicholas, always to second our august empress.

LITERARY CIVILITIES.

IT has been said that it is ridiculous for a man to defend his prose and his verse, when they are no more than prose and verse. Works of taste we must accomplish in silence and concealment.

TERENCE complains in his prologues, of an old poet, who stirred up cabals against him, and who tried to prevent his pieces from being performed, or to strangle them when they were. Terence was wrong, or I deceive myself. He ought (as Cæsar says *) to have

* Tu quoque, tu in summis, ô dimidiâte Menander!

Poneris, et meriti puri sermonis amator.

Lenibus atque utinam scriptis adjuncta foret vis

Comica, ut æquato virtus polleret honore

Cum Græcis, neque in hac despectus parte jaceres!

Unum hoc maceror, et doleo tibi deesse, Terenti.

joined more warmth and more comedy to the natural beauty and elegance of his works. It would have been a better method of replying to his adversary.

CORNEILLE says of his critics. If they say "peas!" I will answer them "beans!" In consequence of this he wrote against the modest Scuderi the following Rondeau, which is a little arrogant.

“ Qu’il fasse mieux ce jeune joyencel,
A qui le ciel donne tant de martel
Que d’entasser injure sur injure,
Rimer de rage, une lourde imposture,
Et se coucher ainsi qu’un criminel.
Chacun connaît son jaloux naturel,
Le montre au doigt comme un fou solennel,
Et ne croit pas en sa bonne écriture.

Qu’il fasse mieux.

Paris entier ayant vu son cartel,
L’envoye au diable, et sa muse au bordel,
Moi j’ai pitié des peines qu’il endure;
Et comme ami je le prie et conjure,
Sil veut ternir un ouvrage immortel,
Qu’il fasse mieux.”

He had afterwards the misfortune to reply to the abbé d’Aubignac, chaplain to the king, who wrote tragedies as he wrote sermons, and who to console himself for the hissings with which his Zenobia was received, sate himself to injure the author of Cinna. Corneille would have done better, had he wrapped himself up in his fame and modesty, than to cry out “beans” to the abbé d’Aubignac, who had cried “peas” to him.

RACINE in some few of his prefaces hath made his critics feel his lash, but he was pardonable in being a little severe against those who sent their lacquies to clap and applaud the Phedre of Pradon, and who retained boxes for the Phedre of Racine, to keep them empty,
and

and make the world believe that it had fallen. These were the great protectors of literature. These were the duke Zoilus, the earl of Bavius, and the marquis Mévius.

MOLIERE acted differently. Cotin, Ménage, Boursaut, had attacked him; he introduced Boursaut, Cotin and Ménage on the stage.

LA FONTAINE, who hath so beautifully embellished and adorned truth in many of his fables, made very poor verses against Furetiere, who did him service. He made a very indifferent satire against Lulli, who was not willing to set to music his execrable opera of Daphne, and who laughed both at his opera and his satire. "I should be better pleased," said he, "to set his satire to music than his opera."

ROUSSEAU, the poet, wrote some good verses and some bad against all the poets of his time, and they pay him in his own coin.

As to the authors, who, in their preliminary discourses to their tragedies or comedies, which are sunk into everlasting oblivion, enter into all the detail of their pieces, and prove to you that the passage which is the most hissed is the best; that the part which is the longest is the most interesting; that their verse, hard, uncouth, and staring with barbarisms and solecisms, is yet worthy of Virgil and Racine. These gentlemen are useful in one point. They serve to shew how far self-love can lead men, and this is of use to morality.

MONSIEUR LE VOLTAIRE wrote one day as follows:
 "The Henriade displeases you; do not read it. Zara,
 "Brutus, Alzira, Merope, Semiramis, Mahomet,
 "Tancred, fatigue you; do not go to them. The age
 "of Louis XIV. appears to you to be written in a ridiculous style; in good time; then do you write a better, and I am very well pleased. I assure you that I
 "shall never be foolish enough to take the part of my
 "manner of writing against yours.

"But if you charge, with guilty credulity, and with wilful falshood, an impartial historian, a lover of truth and of men; if you print and reprint falshoods,
 "yourself,

“ yourself, either through the noble envy that gnaws
 “ your honest heart, or for the purpose of drawing ten
 “ crowns from the purse of a bookseller, I think that
 “ then it is necessary to clear up the facts. The pub-
 “ lic ought to be instructed; it is its interest to be so.
 “ I was wrought upon to produce the certificate of king
 “ Stanislaus, which attests the truth of all the facts report-
 “ ed in the history of Charles XII. The hackney duns
 “ were then confounded, and the public was satisfied.
 “ If your zeal for truth and for manners carries you
 “ to the most atrocious calumnies, and even to certain
 “ impostures, enough to bring a poor author before
 “ his king and country, it is clear that your pro-
 “ cess is criminal, and that the unfortunate man, hurt
 “ and oppressed, whom you wish to hang, ought
 “ at least to defend his cause with all the circumspec-
 “ tion possible.”

I think entirely with M. de Voltaire.

It appears to me, besides, that in our western Europe, all process and contest is carried on by writing. Have the leading powers a quarrel to unravel? they plead, before the Gazetteers who judge between them, in the first resort, and afterwards they appeal from this tribunal to that of their artillery.

Have two citizens a difference on a clause of a contract or of a testament. They print their cases, their duplicates and their new memorials. We have the processes of some mechanics more voluminous than the histories of Tacitus and Suetonius. In these enormous cases, and even at the hearing, the plaintiff maintains that the defendant is a man of bad credit and a base life, that he is a cheater and a forger. The defendant replies with the same politeness. The process of Mademoiselle la Cadiere is comprized in seven huge volumes, and the Eneid takes up no more than one very small one.

It is therefore permitted to the unhappy author of Bagatelles, to plead before three or four dozen of idle people, who conceive themselves to be judges of Bagatelles, and who compose a very good company, provided

vided that the subject is decent, and above all, that it is not tedious; for in these quarrels, if it is wrong to be uncandid, it is still worse to be tedious.

I have sometime read an epistle upon calumny—I know not the author of it; and I am in doubt, whether the stile is not a little familiar; but the latter verses appear to be made for the subject that I treat.

Voici le point sur lequel je me fonde;
On entre en guerre en entrant dans le monde.
Homme privé, vous avez vos jaloux,
Rampans dans l'ombre, inconnus comme vous,
Obscurément, tourmentant votre vie,
Homme public, c'est la publique envie
Qui contre vous lève son front altier.
Le coq jaloux se bat sur son fumier,
L'aigle dans l'air, le taureau dans la plaine,
Tel est l'état de la nature humaine.
La jalousie et tous ses noirs enfans
Tout au théâtre, au conclave, aux couyens.

Montez au ciel; trois déesses rivales
Y vont porter leur haine et leurs scandales;
Et le beau ciel de nous autres chrétiens
Tout comme l'autre eut aussi ses vauriens,
Ne voit-ou pas chez cet atrabilaire
Qui d'Olivier fut un tems secrétaire *
Angé contre Angé, Uriel et Nisroc,
Contre Arioc, Asmodée, et Moloe.
Couvrant de sang les célestes campagnes,
Lançant des rocs, ébranlant des montagnes,
De purs esprits qu'un fendant coupe en deux,
Et du canon tiré de près sur eux;
Et le Messie allant dans un armoire

* Milton, Secretary to Oliver Cromwell, and who justified the murder of Charles I. in the dullest libel that ever was written.

Prendre sa lance, instrument de sa gloire.

Vous voyez bien que la guerre est partout.

Point de repos; cela me . . . pousse à bout.

Eh, quoi toujours alerte, en sentinelle!

Que devient donc la paix universelle,

Qu'un grand ministre en rêvant proposa

Et qu'Irénée* aux sifflets exposa

Et que Jean-Jacque || orna de sa faconde,

Quand il faisait la guerre à tout la monde

O Patouillet! O Nonotte † et conforst!

O mes amis, la paix est chez les morts.

Chrétiennement mon cœur vous la souhaite?

Chez les vivans où trouver sa retraite?

Ou fuir? que faire? a quel Saint recourir?

Je n'en fais point: il faut savoir souffrir.

But, say they, Bernard de Fontenelle, after having written some very severe epigrams against Nicholas Boileau and Racine, said nothing against the very pitiful book of R. P. Balthus of the society of Jesus, who accused him of atheism, for having translated into good French, and with great taste, the learned, but tedious Latin work of Vandall.—The reason of his silence was, that the RR. PP. Lallement and Doucin, of the society of Jesus, gave M. de Fontenelle to understand by the abbé de Tilladet, that if he presumed to answer, they would throw him into the bastile. More than twenty years after, the R. P. le Tellier persecuted Fontenelle, whom he accused of having engaged du Marçais to answer it. § Du Marçais would have been ruined, had it

* The Irénée Castel of St. Pierre.

|| Jean Jacques Rousseau hath also made a very poor work on this subject.

† These are two Ex-Jesuits, the most insolent calumniators of their profession, they will be attended to in the course of this work.

§ See page 101, of the excellent work entitled, "The destruction of the Jesuits," a book written in a provincial stile, but with

not

not been for the president of bedlam, and so would Fontenelle, without M. d'Argenson, as has been often remarked, and as Fontenelle himself, indeed, gives us to understand in his fine eulogy on M. d'Argenson the lord keeper of the great seal. (†)

But, at present, when the R. P. Le Tellier distributes no more his *Lettres de Cachet*, I assert that a dauber of paper is not absolutely justifiable, be he a tagger of rhimes, or a dabbler in prose, of the number of whom I have the honour to be one, to expose the little errors into which good or great men may have transiently fallen, either by inventing, or reporting absurd calumnies—by falsifying their writings, or by counterfeiting their stile—or in abusing such of their contemporaries, as they may wish to ruin, either by accusing them of heresy, of deism, of atheism, or a-propos of a research into anatomy; of having written a few verses of five feet, or of a false point of geography. M. Jean George le F----- bishop of Puy, says, for example, in a pastoral at page 6, speaking of Fontenelle, “That he is armed against christianity, even in his grammar.” We never till that moment were taught that the substantive and the adjective when they agree in gender, number, and case, constructed themselves so, to deny the existence of God.

I mean, for the edification of the public to collect, as evidence in hand, certain juggling tricks of this kind, which have latterly illustrated and adorned literature. This little attempt will be of use to those who enter into the happy pursuit of letters. It is a compendium of a collection of strokes of literature, integrity and charity, which were sent to me some time ago, by a worthy friend, under the title of “A new collection of literary civilities.”

great impartiality. The learned author thus expresses himself. “At the same time that Le Tellier persecuted the Jansenists, he impeached Fontenelle before Lewis XIV. as an atheist, for having written the history of Oracles.”

† Mr. Jean George le Franc, bishop of Puy in Velay, hath renewed this accusation in a pastoral, which must not be compared with the pastorals of Fontenelle,

CIVILITY I.

There are a number of acknowledged fooleries, which are daily printed without any ill consequences, and which serve for the education of youth. The geography of Hubner, is put into the hand of every child, almost from Moscow to Strazbourg. They find there in the first page, that Jupiter changed himself into a bull to ravish Europa, thirteen hundred years, to a day, before Christ; that the inhabitants of Europe are the progeny of Japhet, and that they are in number thirty millions, although Germany alone, possesses nearly that number. He affirms afterwards, that it is impossible to find in Europe, a single league of country uninhabited; although there are twenty leagues of country in Bourdeaux where there is not actually a single house; although in the dominions of the pope, from Orviera to Terracina, there is a very large extent of country totally abandoned; although there are so many immense marshes in Poland, deserts in Russia, and uncultivated territory in every kingdom.

It is said in this book that the king of France has always forty thousand Swiss in his pay, although he has only about twelve thousand.

Mr. Hubner in speaking of Marfailles, says, that the castle of Notre Dame de la Garde is very well fortified. If Mr. Hubner had either seen Marfailles, or read the travels of Bachaumen and Chapelle, he would have had a more exact knowledge of Notre Dame de la Garde.

That government we must regard,

As happy, just, and good;

Which needs for its defence and guard,

But one poor Swiss of wood.

Mr. Hubner assures us, that at Orange there appeared a crown of gold in the heavens at mid-day when William prince of Orange, afterwards king of England, received

received the homage of the inhabitants of that place, "and it was for this reason," says he, "that he had always so much regard for it."

I quote here the book of Hubner among a hundred authors, because I happened to lay my hand on it first. In the "Spectacle de la nature" it is said that Moses was a great physician, that the light arrives from the stars upon the earth in seven minutes, and that the dog of M. le Chevalier is called Mouflar.

This nonsense which we have so much of, does no harm, it prejudices no one, and it is easily corrected by the instructors of youth. But shall an English historian assure us, that the last emperor of the house of Austria, Charles VI. was poisoned by one of his pages, which page fled peaceably to Milan? Shall he say that the king of France at the battle of Fontenoy never passed the Eicaut, when it is averred, that he was on the bridge of Calonne in sight of the two armies? Shall he say that the French poisoned their ball by chewing them, and indenting pieces of glass? shall he say that the duke of Cumberland sent to the king of France a coffer of these balls? and shall these absurd falsehoods be repeated again in other books? These appear to me civilities, which it is just to advert to, and which the author of the age of Louis XIV. hath not passed over in silence.

CIVILITY II.

After the Turkish spy had travelled in France, under Louis XIV. Dufresny made a Siamese accomplish a journey. When this Siamese was departed, the president de Montesquieu gave the vacant place to a Persian, who had much more genius than either the Siamese or the Turk.

This example encouraged a new introducer of ambassadors, who in the war of 1741 did the honours of France to a Turkish spy, who was found to be the most ignorant of all.

When the peace was made, M. le Chevalier Goddard did the honours of almost all Europe to a Chinese spy, who resided at Cologne, and who appeared in six little volumes.

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He says, page 17, of the first volume, that the king of France is the king of beggars, and that if the universe was again overwhelmed with a flood, Paris would be the ark where they might discover in the men and women every species of brutes.

He assures us that an ingenuous and a gay nation which "chamber together," ought not to entertain any ill humour against the women, and that authors, a little polished, ought not to throw out invectives against them in their works. In the mean time, his politeness does not prevent him from treating them very ill.

He says, that the people of Lyons are a degree more stupid than those of Paris, and two degrees more worthless.

Again: shall we not take notice, that the author to sell his book, attacks kings, ministers, generals, and bishops; who knew nothing of the matter, or if they did know, disregarded it. It is truly pleasant to see him with his courtezans in his anti-chamber, while the poor authors that stickle against government, are in the street. But yet the poor writers who have not anti-chambers, are often very much hurt to see themselves loaded with calumny in a letter of a Chinese, who probably has no more an anti-chamber than themselves.

There are beside, many ladies named by the Chinese letter-writer, while he is constantly protesting his respect for the fair sex. It is a certain means of vending his book. The ladies indeed have where-withal to console themselves, but the unhappy vilified authors have not the same resource.

CIVILITY III.

The ecclesiastical gazetteer outraged, once a week for thirty years, the most learned men of Europe, the prelates, the ministers, and sometimes the king himself. All was done by quotations from the scripture. He died unknown, his works died also, and he had a successor.

CIVILITY IV.

Another gazetteer played in literature the same part that the writer of ecclesiastical news had played in the church

church of God. It was the abbé Desfontaines, who was expelled from the society of Jesus for his manners, and driven from France for his intrigues. He threw the psalms into verse, and no one read them. He was perishing with hunger, and he therefore determined for a subsistence, to tear all those which were read. He was shut up in the Bissêtre, and he wrote his books there. In fine, he had a successor also; the successor was the Elisha to this Elias: driven like him from among the Jesuits, and thrown like him into the bissêtre, passing from the bissêtre to the fort l'evêque, and the chatelet, covered with public and private opprobrium, daring to write, and not daring to avow himself. The name of Frelou is absolutely become an injury to a man; and by and by, he will also have a successor, and fools will continue to read his writings, "to form the judgment; "and amend the heart."

CIVILITY V.

The abbé of Cavairac, in his apology for the revocation of the edict of Nantz, and of that of St. Bartholomew, treats as rascals, about twelve hundred thousand persons, who live peaceably in France under the name of the new converts. He falls afterwards on the advocates; he tears the men of letters; he calumniates the ministers. He would have made himself many friends, if he had not made so many readers.

CIVILITY VI.

A man of one of the provinces, solicited a place in a respectable corps in the capital, and obtained it, and as a reward, he told his compatriots, that they, and all those who aspired to be incorporated with them, were extravagant, enemies of the state, and of religion, and men even without taste who did not read his canticles.

My correspondent has not informed me in what country this adventure happened, I suspect that it was in America. He adds, that this discourse of the candidate produced some miserable pleasantries, that we must pardon in those concerned. Happy are those who when they are abused, content themselves with laughing at
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the author! You know, my dear reader, that the public are always alert in discovering the faults of men of letters, as they are on the pride, the avarice, and the leachery which they so frequently reproach in monks. The more that a state exacts of circumspection, the more do we remark its weaknesses, and if the monks have made a vow of chastity, humility, and poverty; men of letters appear to have made a vow of reason.

CIVILITY VII.

When the R. P. le Velette, alias Duclos, alias le Fevre, had made his first bankruptcy, ad majorem societatis gloriam; when the hugenot printers had revived the introductory pages of an old edition of R. P. Bussembaum, which they made to pass for a new one, and when they thus threw the first stone, without knowing it, which served to pelt the society of Jesus; when these fathers wrote so many books, in favour of their corps which never were read; when some prelates imagining that the society of Jesus was immortal and invulnerable, brought their cause into more disrepute by writings to that effect; when the hangman burned, according to custom, an excellent letter of the right reverend father in God, Jean George le Franc, bishop of Puy in Velay; there was then an inundation of pamphlets, and as many injuries committed on the one part and the other, as there were Jesuits in France.

The principal instance of civility was between the R R. P. P. Dominicans, and the R R. P. P. Jesuits. The Jesuits in a piece entitled, "*Lettre d'un homme, du monde à un theologien.*" Letter from a man of the world to a theologian, page 4, compliments the Dominicans on their brother Politien de Montepulciano, who, say they, poisoned with the host, the wicked emperor Henry VII; on the *blessed* Jacques Clement, so named by the confederacy; on Edmund Burgoyne the prior; and on the brothers Pierre Argier, and Ridicouffe, who were both broken on the wheel at Paris.

The Dominicans answered to this compliment, by a long enumeration of the martyrs of the society, and

this

this list was not concluded, the two parties called to their assistance St. Thomas d'Aquinas. He conducted himself to promote a good understanding between them, and it was a great effort of theology. The one and the other took advantage of his words; they agree to what St. Thomas says, book II, question 42, article 2, that those who deliver the people from a wicked king, are highly commendable.

That the bad prince is the only seditious person.

That there are cases where he who kills him deserves reward.

That according to the St. Thomas d'Aquinas, book XI. question 12, a prince who becomes an apostate, loses his dominion over his subjects.

That if he is excommunicated, his subjects are, ipso facto, delivered from their oath of allegiance, "ejus subditis et juramento fidelitatis ejus liberati sunt."

That as it is permitted to resist thieves, so is it permitted us to resist bad princes: "Ut scilicet resistere latronibus, ita licet in tali casu resistere malis principibus." Lib. , XI. question 69.

All this was found in their appeal to reason, with many other matters equally edifying, printed in 1762, under the title of Brussels.

It is said, that among the Dominicans, when a doctor of divinity dies, they place a bible of St. Thomas's in his coffin.

The profane having read these great questions in St. Thomas d'Aquinas, have pretended that he desired for public tranquillity, that all his summaries should also be interred with them. But this sentiment appears to me rather too severe.

After this dispute, which interested in a very lively manner, ten or eleven readers; there existed another between the same combatants, on the subject of the book, de matrimonio of R. P. Sanchez, who was regarded in Spain, and by all the Jesuits in the world, as a father of the church. This dispute reached the 262d page of a new appeal to reason; and we must say that rea-

son ought to have been astonished, that they should submit such a process, to her tribunal.

They discuss there three questions, exceedingly interesting. The first, "*quando vas innaturale usurpatur.*" The second, "*quando feminatio non est simultanea.*" The third, "*quando feminatio est extra vas.*" My decency and respect for the ladies prevent me from translating into English this theological dispute. I have professed to confine myself merely to see how theologicians are civil.

CIVILITY VIII.

A man of a vast genius, of an immense education, of indefatigable study, and whose name hath reached all Europe, from the bosom of his very profound retreat, undertook the greatest and the most difficult work with which literature hath ever been honoured. The best geometrician in France joined himself to him. This geometrician, who adds to the delicacy of Fontenelle, the strength that Fontenelle never possessed, gave a plan of this celebrated enterprize, which was that of an Encyclopedia. A man of an illustrious name, who hath dedicated all his life to letters, a skilful physician, a profound metaphysician, and a man very well versed in history, and other kinds of science, accomplished, by himself, almost the fourth part of this useful work; he treated of learned men, of men of genius, of ancient military officers, of ancient magistrates, of skilful physicians, of artists, and all successfully, with a view to give to Europe a magazine of sciences and arts, without any interest, and without any selfish vain glory. It was against their inclinations that the bookseller published their names. M. de Voltaire above all, prayed that his name might not appear. What hath been the acknowledgement of certain would-be gentlemen of the literary world, for an enterprize so advantageous to themselves? they have decried it, they have defamed the authors; they have pursued them, and they have accused them of irreligion and high-treason.

CIVILITY IX.

Mr. Abraham Chaumeix (I know not who he is) having requested a part in this great work, and being denied, for this reason, determined to denounce vengeance on the authors. He suspected that he who had principally contributed to his rejection, was he who composed the article "foul," and because he was his enemy, he must be an atheist: he therefore delivered judgment upon him as such. On this it was discovered, that the author of the article was a good and a very pious doctor of the Sorbonne, who declared that he was very much astonished that he should be accused of denying the existence of God, and the foul, and he concludes that if Abraham Chaumeix has a foul, it is a very severe, and a very ignorant one.

CIVILITY X.

A gentleman of Brittany who has written some excellent comedies, hath given us some very curious anecdotes, on the city of Paris, and on the history of France, printed with privilege, and also with the approbation of the public. Soon, however, the authors of I know not what, reviews* (for I never read reviews) wrote in their publications, dedicated to the court, and sold at twelve pence per month, that the author was incontestibly an atheist, or a deist; and that it was impossible that this should be otherwise, as he had said that Maugiron, Quelus and St. Mélgrin, who were slain during the reign of Henry III. were interred in the church of St. Paul; and that they were not inclined to bury an old woman beneath a withered tree, before they had seen her will.

The Briton, who did not understand rallery, assigned to the chatelet, the authors of the reviews, by means of the lieutenant colonel, in reparation of his honour, and in punishment for this attack, where they lay till the month of June 1763. The pamphleteers com-

* These are the authors of the Christian journal, but the journal not being good, it has been said, that it is a bad Christian.

promised the affair, and were forced to ask pardon for their incivility.

CIVILITY XI.

An author who loved not the writers of the great and useful work, of which we have already spoken, prostituted them on the theatre, and introduced them flying into a bag. It was not thus that Moliere painted Trissotin and Vadius. He will tell me perhaps that the galley slaves, in the time of king Charles VII, condemned of a crime, having obtained their liberty from the good king, ran away with all his baggage, as is reported, in the abbé Tristeme*, page 298; but I must beg leave to inform him, that those who at this day do honour to French literature, are not cut-purses, and that moreover there is no pleasantry in this trick.

CIVILITY XII.

The weekly pamphleteers have said, that Mr. d'Alembert is a rabzacès, a philistine, an amorean, a stinking beast. I know not precisely wherefore. Rabzacès signifies a great drunkard in Syriac, but Mr. d'Alembert is not a great drunkard, he is perhaps of all the world, the man the least addicted to drinking, he is not

* Pendant la nuit la horde grifonnante
Sous le drapeau du gâzetier, de Nante,
Habilement avoit débarassé
Notre bon roi de son leste équipage.
Ils prétendaient que pour de vrais guerriers,
Selon Platon, le luxe est peu d'usage.
Puis se sauvant par de petits sentiers,
Au cabaret la proie ils partagèrent!
Là par écrit docilement ils couchèrent
Un beau traité bien moral, bien chrétien,
Sur le mépris des plaisirs et du bien.
Ou y prouva que les hommes sont frères,
Nés tous égaux, devant tous partager
Les dons de Dieu, les humaines misères
Vivre en commun pour se mieux soulager.
Ce livre saint mis depuis en lumière,
Fut enrichi d'un pieux commentairé
Pour diriger et l'esprit et le cœur,
Avec préface, et l'avis au Lecteur.

in truth, either a rabzacès, a Syrian, a philistine, or an amorean; he is not a beast, and he does not stink. I know only that he is one of the greatest geometers, a man of as fine a genius, and as good a heart as any in Europe. This was never said of Rabzacès.

CIVILITY XIII.

The pamphleteers have shewn the strangest civilities towards M. de Montesquieu and M. de Buffon. They have written against the one, the letters of Péru, which ought not to have a Péruvian for their author. They have proved to the other that he is a deist or an atheist, the term is equal, because he has praised the stoics; and they have proved all as the R. P. Hendouin of the society of Jesus hath demonstrated, that Paschal, Nichol, Arnaud, and Mallebranche, never believed in God.

Qui méprise Cotin n'estime point son roi
On n'a (selon Cotin) ni roi, ni foi, ni loi.

For laughing at the crown, who blames Cotin,
Who says we've neither faith, nor law, nor king.

CIVILITY XIV.

Behold here a compliment in a new taste. Jean Jacques Rousseau, who passes neither for the most judicious, nor the most considerable of men; neither for the most modest, nor the most grateful; was carried to England by a protector, who exerted his interest to obtain for him a secret pension from the king. Jean Jacques took the secret pension as an affront. By and by he writes a letter, in which he sacrifices his eloquence and his taste to his resentment against his benefactor, Mr. Hume; and every paragraph he concludes with these words, " premier soufflet, second soufflet, troisième soufflet sur le " joue de mon patron;" the first blow, the second blow, the third blow on the cheek of my patron. Ah! Jean Jacques, three blows for one pension! it is too much.

Tudieu, l'ami, sans vous rien dire,
Comme vous baillez des soufflets!

[AMPHITRION, ACT I.]

What! a Genevese give three blows to a Scotchman! It makes me tremble for the consequences. What man is there equal to Jean Jacques! if the king of England had granted the pension, he would have had the fourth blow. Jean Jacques is a terrible man! he pretends, in I know not what romance, entitled, *Heloise*, or *Aloisia*, that he fought with an English lord of the upper assembly, of whom he afterwards received alms. He wrought miracles they say, at Venice; he never failed to calumniate the men of letters at Paris. There are literary men who never attack any person, but who make a very active and vigorous war when they are attacked, and God is always for the right side. The civilities of Jean Jacques have drawn upon him, as we have seen, very particular returns. There is justice in the world, and for every little attempt which a man makes at incivility, he finds a very ample return from the powerful antagonist who will not be in his debt.

CIVILITY XV.

A new instance of civility, and which was not heretofore known in literature, is, to print letters under the name of a well known author, or to forge those which have gone into the world, by the too great inattention of friends, and to stuff these letters with the most enormous dullness, joined to calumnies the most insolent. It is thus, that by the latter artifice they have printed at Amsterdam, under the title of Geneva, the pretended secret letters of the author of the *Henriade*; which letters, if they had been secret, ought not to have been published. There is, above all, in these secret letters, a correspondent, named the Count de Bar-sur-Aube, who is a sour man; but as there never has been a Count de Bar-sur-Aube, we cannot put any great faith in these secret letters.

Afterwards,

Afterwards, one named Schneider, a bookseller of Amsterdam, published under the title of Geneva, "the letters of the same man to his friends in Parnassus." That is the title. We find that these friends are the king of Poland, the king of Prussia, the Elector Palatine, the duke de Bouillon, &c. Beside the decency of the title, they make the author of the *Henriade* and of the age of Louis XIV. say in one of these letters, that at the court of France "Il y a d'agréables commeres, qui aiment Jean Jacques Rousseau comme leur toutou;" there are some agreeable gossips who love Jean Jacques Rousseau as their puppy. They subjoin to the names of these ladies, infamous notes against many very respectable characters; and there are three letters to a chevalier de Bruan, who never existed, and whom they call "my dear Philinte." The editor doubts whether these three letters are written by M. de Montesquieu, or M. de Voltaire, although not one of their lacquies would wish for the honour of having written them*. It has been already said, that these pitiful things are sold at the fair of Leipfick, as they sell the wine of Orleans, for that of Pontac. It is good therefore to put those on their guard who are not wine conners.

CIVILITY XVI.

It is very necessary to advise our readers, that the simple, sound, and noble stile, adorned, but not surcharged with flowers, which characterises the good authors of the age of Louis XIV. appears now too cold, and too low for the little authors of our day. They

* See some lines of the last, to my dear Philinte. "Il est impossible qu'il y ait un grand-homme parmi nos rois, puisqu'ils sont abrutis et avilis dès le berceau par une foule des scélérats qui les environne et qui les obsède jusqu'au tombeau." It is impossible that there can be a great man among our kings, since they are besotted and abused by the croud of rascals that surround and possess them, from the cradle to the grave.

It is thus that they speak of the dukes of Montausier and Beauvilliers, of the Bossuets, the Fenelons, and their successors. This is called to write nobly, and to support the rights of men. This is the elegant stile of new-fashioned eloquence.

believe that they are truly eloquent when they write with immoderate violence. They think that they are Montesquieus, when they at random insult courts and ministers, from their loathsome garrets; and when they are, without genius, wit or discretion, heaping invective upon invective. They think that they are Tacituses when they dash some confident solecisms in the teeth of men, whose valets de chambre even would disdain to speak to them. They set up for Catos and for Brutuses, with their pens in their hands. The good writers of the age of Louis XIV, had strength. The writers of the present day strive only at contortions.

Who would believe that a beggarly scribbler had published in 1752, in a book entitled, "*Mes pensees*," my thoughts, the following words, and who also would believe them to be in the true stile of Montesquieu?

"Une république qui ne serait formée que de scélérats
 "du premier ordre, produirait bientôt un peuple de
 "sages, de conquérans et de héros. Une république
 "fondée par Cartouche aurait eu de plus sages loix que la
 "république de Solon.

"La mort de Charles I. a fait plus de bien à l'Angle-
 "terre que n'en aurait fait le règne le plus glorieux de
 "ce prince.

"Les forfaits de Cromwell sont si beaux, que l'enfant
 "bien né n'entend point prononcer le nom de ce grand-
 "homme sans joindre les mains d'admiration."

A republic not formed by rascals of the highest order, will quickly produce a wise, a conquering, and a warlike people. A republic founded by Cartouche, would have had wiser institutions than the republic of Solon.

The death of Charles I. did more good to England, than the most glorious reign of that prince could possibly have done.

The offences of Cromwell were so admirable, that the high-born child cannot pronounce the great man's name without folding its hands in admiration."

These thoughts have been reprinted, and the author to the second edition, places in the title page, "the
 seventh

seventh edition," in order to encourage us to buy and read it. He has dedicated it to his brother, and signed himself "Gonia Palaios." Gonia signifies an angle; Palaios old, his name in truth is, old angle. He is called La Beaumelle. It is he who forged the letters of madame de Maintenon, and who hath stuffed the memoirs of Maintenon, with absurd stories, and the falsest anecdotes.

CIVILITY XVII

We all know the history of the age of Louis XIV. impartial as this book is, it is dedicated to the glory of the French nation, as to the glory of arts in general; and it is owing to its impartiality that it confirms this glory. It has been received among all the nations of Europe, because truth is universally sought after. Louis XV. who hath condescended to read it more than once, hath publickly testified his approbation of it. I speak not of its stile, which certainly is nothing valuable, I speak of its matter and contents.

The same la Beaumelle, of whom I have already made honourable mention, before this, was preceptor to the children of a gentleman who sold Ferney to the author of the age of Louis XIV. driven from the house of this gentleman, he took refuge in Denmark; driven from Denmark, he fled to Berlin; expelled from Berlin, he fled to Gotha; driven from Gotha, he took up his temporary residence in Franckfort; this man, I say, prevailed on himself at Franckfort to be the author of an action, the most honourable to literature.

He sold for seventeen louis d'ors, to a bookseller named Estinger, an edition of the age of Louis XIV, which he took care to mutilate, alter, and corrupt in many important places, and he enriched it with notes of his own hand writing; in these notes he outraged all the generals, all the ministers, the king himself, and the royal family. But he did this with that tone of superiority and pride which suits so well with a man of his estate, consummate in the knowledge of history.

He says, very learnedly, that the female line inherit at this day on the part of Navarrere-united to the crown.

He

He assures us that the marquis of Vauban was a mere plagiarist: he decides that Poland can never produce a great man; he says, that the learned Danes are all ignorant, that all the gentlemen are silly, and he makes a most ridiculous portrait of the brave count de Plélo. He adds, that he did not kill himself at Dantzick because he longed to perish at Copenhagen. Not content with so many insolencies, which could not be read, because they were so; he attacks the memory of the Mareschal de Villeroi, he relates of him all the stories and tales of the populace. He launches out into digression at the expense of the Mareschal de Villars—A la Beaumelle throws ridicule on the Mareschal de Villars! He abuses the marquis de Torci, the marquis de la Vrilliere, two ministers dear to the nation by their probity. He exhorts all authors “a sevir contre Mr. Chamillart” to misuse against Mr. Chamillart—that is his elegant expression.

In fine he caluminates Louis XIV. by saying that he poisoned the marquis de Louvois, and after this criminal falsehood, which exposed him to the severest chastisement, he spewed forth the same calumnies against the brother and the nephew of Louis XIV.

What could become of such a work?—young provincials and strangers enquire of the booksellers for the age of Louis XIV.—The bookseller demands of them if they want this book with the ingenious and learned notes. The purchasers answer him, that without doubt, they want the work compleat—he sells them therefore that of la Beaumelle.

People who are fond of giving their advice, tell us to despise the infamous fellow; that he is not worth the pains we take to speak of him. A pleasant advice indeed—that is to say, we must leave the impostor to triumph in his villainy—No—he must be made notorious. We frequently punish those whom we despise, and, to speak properly, we punish no other, for all offence is shameful.

In the mean-time this honest man having dared to appear at Paris, they were contented to shut him up for
some

some time in the bissetre, after which he was confined in a village near Montpellier.

This la Beaumelle is the same who has since that time published the forged letters of M. de Voltaire, at Amsterdam, and Avignon, accompanied with infamous notes against the ministers of state.

“ We always love the trade we chose the first.”

We may ask after such examples, if it is not a thousand times better to be a footman in an honest house than to be the bel esprit of footmen. And we may also ask, if the author of a little poem intituled “ Le Pauvre Diable.” The poor devil had not reason to say :

J'estime plus ces honnêtes enfans,
Qui de Savoie arrivent tous les ans.
Et dont la main légèrement effuie
Ces longs canaux egorgés par la suie ;
J'estime plus celle qui dans un coin
Tricote en paix les bas dont j'ai besoin ;
Le cordonnier qui vient de me chauffer
Prendre à genoux la forme et la mesure,
Que le métier de tes obscurs Frerons.
Maître Abraham et ses vils compagnons
Sont une espèce encore plus odieuse ;
Quant au catins, j'en fais assez de cas :
Leur art est doux, et leur vie est joyeuse.
Si quelquefois leurs dangereux appas
A l'hôpital mènent un pauvre diable,
Un grand bûnet qui fait l'homme agréable,
Je leur pardonne : il l'a bien mérité.

I cite these verses to shew that the trade of these pitiful daubers, these pitiful pamphleteers, these pitiful calumniators, these pitiful forgers of street coin, is abominable ; as to that of the young ladies who ruin their culls : I do not altogether agree with the poor devil in
their

their case : we ought without doubt to treat them with civility, but on some conditions.

CIVILITY XVIII.

The son of a footman of M. de Maucroix, which son was also himself a footman for some time, and who often served the abbé d'Olivet at table, has now risen by his merit : we are very far from reproaching him for his first employment, from which his merit has drawn him, as we have already approved the maxim, that it is better to be the lacquey of a man of genius than the bel esprit of lacquies. A young man served faithfully a good master; he instructed himself; he gained an estate. There is nothing of indignity in all this; nothing of which virtue or honour ought to be ashamed. Pope Adrian IV. had been a beggar. Sextus Quintus a feeder of hogs : whoever raises himself hath at least that kind of merit which contributes to his fortune, and provided that he is neither insolent nor wicked, all the world will honour in him that fortune which he has acquired.

This man, named d'Etree, because his father was of the village of Etree, having cultivated the belles-lettres in place of cultivating his garden, soon became a pamphleteer, by-and-by an almanack-maker, and afterwards he published his *L'annee-meirveilleuse*, his marvellous year, for which he was imprisoned; then he became a priest; and afterwards a genealogist. He laboured with M. d'Hozier, and left him, for a reason which I wish not to relate. In fine he obtained a little priory in the depth of one of the provinces. M. the prior went to make himself known in his seigniory, in 1763, and as he is a genealogist, he made himself pass, but with circumspection, for a nephew of cardinal d'Etrees. He received a very polite invitation, in this quality, from a lady who has an estate in the neighbourhood, and was treated as a man who would be a cardinal one day.

As there was not a house in his priory, he held his court in a neighbouring tavern. He wrote a letter full of dignity to the lord of the parish, who dabbled in prose,
and

and verse as well as the abbé d'Etree. He informed this neighbour that a young man of his house had dared to hunt on the grounds of the priory, which contained I think, a hundred fathom in extent; that he agreed most willingly to give up his right of hunting to the only person in the neighbourhood, of literature, because he was seventy-one years of age, and was almost blind, but no others ought to scare away the game of monsieur the prior, who neither, alas! had game nor poultry. The young man, who had imprudently stepped two or three hundred paces into the grounds of the priory, was a gentleman who feared nothing of the right of reparation. Another letter from M. the prior to his neighbour, produced no more of answer than the first.

The prior, departed meditating a noble vengeance; he went into Picardy with a nobleman, whose genealogy he was making out, and there happened to be a considerable magistrate of the parliament of Paris in the neighbourhood, M. the Abbé d'Etree before this magistrate, accused him who had not written to him an answer.

D'avoir fait un gros livre, un livre abominable

Un livre à mériter la dernière rigueur

Dont le traître a le front de le faire l'auteur

Misanthrope, Acte IV. *

M. the prior, who triumphs, and who writes to a steward of his estate: "he is lost; he will never recover it; his business is done: deceived himself, but we have room to hope that he will succeed better another time."

Poor men of letters! behold what you have brought upon yourselves, whether you write or whether you do not write. You must not only make your respects, "taliter qualiter," as says Rabelais, and speak always well of M. the prior, but you must also answer the let-

* We see that the times of Moliere were as wicked as our own.
ters

ters that he writes to you—negligence in this point hath before now wounded his great heart, and you see with what nobility a prior revenges himself.

CIVILITY XIX.

The author of the history of Charles XII. had published it about twenty years before the father Barré gave his History of Germany. However, the father Barré judged proper to introduce into his work almost all the battles of Charles XII. the sieges, the discourses, the characters, and even the bons mots. Certain journalists, in their writings, adapted to the readers of that singular character who approve of and study from periodical publications, did not consider the dates of the two editions, and not having even read the father du Barré, (for he is seldom read) did not doubt but that M. de Voltaire had stolen from the father Barré, or at least they pretended to believe so, and they called the author of Charles XII. a plagiarist. But it is a bagatelle, which deserves not to be revived. These little falsehoods are the profits of pamphleteers, and all the world must live.

CIVILITY XX.

It is an admirable secret to discover a manuscript poem, which we may ascribe to some celebrated author; and which may appear to possess some marks of authenticity, although the poem be stuffed with verses worthy of Vertamon's coachman; to insert in it the most ridiculous nonsense against Charlemagne, and St. Louis; to introduce Calvin and Luther in the eleventh century; although they were in the seventh; to slip into it some verses against the ministers of state; and in fine, to speak of love in the language of a guard-house. The editors hope to sell to great advantage this fine poetry, and these tavern libels, and that the author to whom they are attributed, will be infallibly ruined.

The gentlemen have a double advantage to draw from this manœuvre; their own profit in the first place, and afterwards the hurt of another. Indeed, messieurs, you deceive yourselves, they have more discernment at Ver-

failles

faillies and Paris than you believe; and those quibus est equus, et pater et res, are not your dupes. They will never impute to the author of *Alzira* these verses.

Chandos, suant et soufflant comme un bœuf

Cherche du doigt si Jeanne est une fille;

Au diable soit, dit-il, la sotte aiguille!

Bientôt le diable emporte l'étau neuf;

Il veut encor secouer sa guenille. . .

Chacun avait son trot et son allure,

Chacun piquait à l'envi sa monture &c.

They have taken the pains to make about three hundred verses in this taste, and attributed them to the author of the *Henriade*. There is verse for gentlemen, and there is verse for blackguards, and it is absolutely a matter of indifference to some booksellers in Holland, and at Avignon, which they buy.

For the better understanding to what length scribblers will descend, it is necessary to know, that the authors of these handsome conceits having failed of their purpose, published at Liege, a new edition of the same work, in which they introduce variety of sarcasms, which they believe to be severe against Madame de Pompadour; they send her a copy of the book, and she throws it into the fire. They write her anonymous letters, which she answers in turn to a gentleman, whom they wish to destroy. Anonymous letters are a great resource, and are very much made use of by those generous men, who are fond of speaking severe truths. The beggars in literature, are the dealers in this commodity, and he who writes these instructive memoirs, preserves ninety four anonymous letters that he has received from these gentlemen.

CIVILITY XXI.

The ex-reverend father, the ex-jesuit Nonotte, as great a lover of truth as Varellas, Maimbourg, or Versac, &c. not being content with the competent portion
which

which was given to the here-to-fore brethren of the society of Jesus, took it into his head to gain some money, about four years ago, by selling to a bookseller of Avignon named Fez, a critique on the works of Voltaire, or rather on the works attributed to Voltaire.

Bur, Nonotte loving money more than truth, made a proposition to M. de Voltaire, to sell him the edition for a thousand crowns; not doubting but that M. de Voltaire, fearing so great an adversary as Nonotte, would not hesitate to make the purchase for this trifling sum; after which, Nonotte and his accomplices would not have failed to make a new edition of the libel, corrected and augmented.

I have, to the misfortune of the pitiful Nonotte, the letter of Fez, in the original, and the following is a copy of it, word for word.

S I R,

Before I put into publication a work which relates to you, I have considered it my duty to give you previous notice. The title is "Erreurs de M. de Voltaire, sur les faits historiques, dogmatiques, &c." "Errors of M. de Voltaire, on historical and dogmatical facts, &c." in two volumes in 12mo. by an anonymous author. I offer you the edition of 1500 copies, at two livres per sheet, amounting to 3000 livres. The work is universally called for. I offer you, I say, the edition in confidence, and I shall not by any means permit it to transpire, that I have received any order from you.

I have the honour to be, with the most profound respect

S I R,

Your most obedient,

and very humble Servant

F E Z, Bookseller at Avignon.

Avignon, April 30, 1762.

M.

M. de Voltaire accustomed to such propositions, on the parts of the blackguards of literature, * was too honest to purchase an edition so considerable, at so vile a price. He paid the bookseller Fez, his accompt in full; and he gave a short relation of the success of Nonotte and Fez. This letter was printed by those, who print every thing: they say that it is pleasant, I am no judge of rally; I seek only for truth.

CIVILITY XXII.

A very common one.

I return to you, my dear Nonotte, the ex-companion of Jesus. I must discover how far you are honest and charitable, how much you are acquainted with truth; how dearly you love it; and with what noble zeal you have joined yourself with a herd of beggars, who throw their filth at those who cultivate letters with success.

Have you gained by the two volumes, the thousand crowns that you wished to pilfer from M. de Voltaire, by your bookseller Fez? I make you my compliments on the occasion. Garasse is not so well skilled as you, and the contractor Mahatra does not approach near to you in the market that you have prepared. But, dear Nonotte, it is not enough to make good markets, we must have reason at times.

I. In attacking an essay on the manners and spirit of nations, you ought not to begin, by saying that Trajan, so known for his virtues, was a barbarian and a persecutor; and on what foundation do you found that he was cruel? Because he ordered "that the Christians

* We find in the Miscellanies of literature, of M. de Voltaire, another letter of the same kind, signed la Jonchère, and we are informed there also, that the learned authors of the history of the regency, and of the life of the duke of Orleans, the regent, have taken this la Jonchère for the treasurer-general of war, nearly in the same manner, as some pretended wits took the young, debauched, obscure author Petronius, for the consul Petronius; the impotent, disgusting, and wrinkled Trimalcian for the young emperor Nero; the foolish and prostituted Fortunata, for the beautiful Poppea; and Encelpius for Seneca. In omnibus rebus, qui vult decipi decipiat.

“should not be restrained from publishing their doctrines,
“and that he permitted some of them to be impeached.”

He was just in impeaching those, who driven along by an indiscreet zeal, like Polyuctes, would have broken the statues in the temples, insulted the priests, and molested the public tranquillity. These fanatics were condemned by the holy councils. A king as good as Trajan, would at this day, without being cruel, punish severely the Christian Nonotte, if he was impeached, as a calumniator, and if he was convicted of having published his own errors under the name of the errors of another; of having placed the title of Amsterdam to his work, in contempt of the royal ordinances, and of having wilfully and traitorously slandered his neighbour.

2. It has been already told you that you are deficient in truth, when you reproach the author of an Essay on General History, for these words which you quote as his, “Christian ignorance commonly represents Dioclesian, as an enemy armed, without interruption, against the faithful.” It has been already declared, and it is now declared again, that these words, “Christian ignorance” are not in any one edition of this work; not even in the stolen edition of John Neaulme. What will you say if you should find in any good book the ignorance of Nonotte? will you put in place of the other words, the Christian ignorance of Nonotte? Will you expose to the suspicious world that Nonotte the Ex-jesuit is a very bad Christian, although he calumniates others?

You answer, that there are Christians badly informed, who have said that Dioclesian always persecuted, and that consequently their error may be called “a Christian ignorance.”

My friend, behold on your part an ignorance a little jesuitical. You make a most pleasant distinction: you evade the question very humourously!—Do not any more corrupt the text; confess your own error and tear the passage.

3. You continue to canonise the action of the centurion Marcel, who threw down his belt, his sword, and

and his rod, at the head of his troop, and declared before the army that he must not serve, any longer, his emperor. My friend, take care, the minister of war wishes discipline to be preserved in the service—your Marcel is a bad example. Be a good Christian if you can, but give us no sedition, I beseech you: remember your brother Guignard, and be wise.

You praise, also, the good Christian who tore the edict of the emperor. Nonotte, this is too much. Take care of yourself—the king loves not to hear that his edicts are torn—he will consider it as a crime. Know you not very well that it is a crime of high treason in the second degree. You give for a reason that this edict was unjust. Was it then permitted to this Christian to decide on the justice of an act of council? or will you tell us that any Jesuit or Jansenist at this day will take that liberty?

Pitiful Nonotte! will you for ever tease us with repeating the stories of the Theban legion, and of the little Romanus, born a stammerer, whose rattle they could not put a stop to, till they deprived him of his tongue? Must we again tell you that there never was a Theban legion; that the Roman emperors had no more Egyptian legions than they had Jewish; that we have the names of all the legions in the limits of the empire, and that there is no mention of any Theban; but that they had usually three Roman legions in Egypt?

Must we inform you again that the facts, the dates, and the places all depose against the truth of this history, which is, indeed, worthy of Rabelais? Must we repeat to you that they did not make six thousand armed men suffer martyrdom in the hollow of a mountain which could not contain three hundred? Believe this, Nonotte, and let us marry the six thousand Theban soldiers to eleven thousand virgins; it will be almost two to each; they will be therefore well provided for; and in regard to the tongue of the little Romanus, I advise you to hold your own tongue, and with reason.

5. Be persuaded, like me, that David left when he died, twenty-five thousand millions of silver counted, in the city of Horshalhaim; I agree to it, obtain, I pray you, that your adequate portion be assigned to you out of this royal treasure; run after the three hundred foxes which Samson tied by the tails; dine off the fish which swallowed up Jonas—serve as an ass to Balaam, and speak—and I am still agreeable.—But by St. Ignatius do not write a panegyric on Aod, who assassinated king Eglon; and on Samuel, who hashed into mince meat king Agag because he was too fat—there is no reason in this. Do you see with the same eyes? I love kings—I respect them—I wish not to see them hashed—and parliaments are of the same opinion—are you so, Nonotte?

6. You find that that there have not been enough of the Albigeans and of the Calvinists slain—you approve of the punishment of John Huz, and of Hierome of Prague, as well as of that of Urban Grandier; but you say nothing of the edifying death of the reverend father Malagrida, of the reverend Guignard, of the reverend father Garnet, of N. P. Oldecorn, and of R. P. Croton. Alas! my friend, you have very little idea of justice!

7. Do not go deeper into the discussion of Pepin's donation. Doubt, friend Nonotte, doubt, and doubt also of what the original of the cession of Ravenna has discovered to you; doubt I say. Know you not well, that Ravenna at that time was a place more considerable than Rome, with an excellent harbour, and that he might cede the useful dominion, reserving to himself the property of the city. Know you not well that Athanasius the librarian is the first who mentions this property? Do you believe, in honest truth, that Charlemagne would have spoken in his testament of Rome and Ravenna, as of cities belonging to him, if the pope had been the absolute master?

I own that St. Peter wrote a very good letter to Pepin, from Heaven, and that the holy pope sent the letter to the pious Pepin, which very much affected him.

him. I own that pope Stephen went into France, to consecrate Pepin, who had wrested the crown from his master, and I confess that he was afterwards crowned by another saint. I own, that pope Stephen being taken unwell at St. Dennis, was cured by St. Peter and St. Paul, who appeared to him along with St. Dennis, attended by a deacon and sub-deacon. I own that the Abbé de Vertot, whom the pope had shut up in the convent of Carloman, who was brother to Pepin, and despoiled by him, was suspected of having poisoned Carloman, to prevent all discussion between the two brothers.

I own, even that another pope found afterwards on the altar of the cathedral of Ravenna, a letter of Pepin, which gave Ravenna to the holy see, but this did not prevent Charlemagne from governing Rome and Ravenna. The domains that the archbishops have in Rheims, in Rouen, and in Lyons, do not hinder our kings from being the sovereigns of Rheims, Rouen, and Lyons.

Know that all the good histories of Germany, place at this day, the donation of the sovereignty of Pepin's exarchate, with the donation of Constantine. And know also, that the mistake arises from some of the first writers, as exact as yourself, having confounded "Patrimonium Petri et Pauli," with "dominium imperiale." This is the circumstance which makes it equivocal.

8. What! will you again speak of the bigamies and trigamies of the primitive race? will not one Jesuit shut the mouth of another? will not Daniel suffice to confound Nonotte? read then your Daniel, dry as it is; read the 110th page of the first volume in quarto, read Nonotte, read, and you will find that the great Theodobert married the fair Deuterie, although the fair Deuterie had a husband, and the great Theodobert a wife; that this wife was called Visigarde, who was daughter to a king of the Lombards, named Vacon, very little known in history. You will find that Theodobert imitated in this double, or single bigamy, his uncle Clotaire. These are the words of Daniel.

“Son oncle Clotair après avoir épousé la femme de Clodamir son père peu de tems après la mort de ce prince, quoiqu’il eût déjà une autre femme, et il en eut trois pendant quelque tems, dont deux étaient sœurs.”

“His uncle Clotaire, after having married the wife of Clodamir his brother, a short time after the death of that prince, although he had already another wife, and he had three for some time, of whom, two were sisters.”

This is not very well written, and you will not approve the stile, unless you love your neighbour as well as yourself. But, my friend, if Daniel writes badly, he at least speaks the truth in this place, and therein consists the difference between you two.

I am inclined to relate to you an anecdote on the subject of bigamy. The lord Cowper, chancellor of England, married two ladies, who lived with him very cordially in the same house. This was the happiest management in the world. The bigamist wrote a small book on the legitimacy of his two marriages, and supported it by facts. M. de Voltaire was deceived in relating this anecdote. He mistook the Lord Cowper for the Lord Trevor. He however excused himself to the family of Trévör with extreme politeness. It is not so with you, Nonotte. You wilfully deceive yourself in the rudest manner.

9. But, my dear Nonotte, when you have made two volumes of errors, which you call the errors of another, do you think that he whom you abuse, will lose his time in answering your blunders? would the public amuse themselves with a huge folio, entitled the Errors of Nonotte? I wish only to present you with a small bouquet, but I really am bewildered in my choice of the flowers. Behold en passant, some flowers for Nonotte.

“There is not,” you say, “one convent in France where the religious have two hundred thousand livres of rent.” It is true: the poor monks have nothing; but the abbés, regular or irregular, of Cîteaux and Clervaux have two hundred thousand livres; and I advise you to be their farmer, you will gain more than from the

the bookseller Fez. The abbé de Citeaux hath begun a building, of which the architect shewed me the plan, it will cost seventeen hundred thousand livres. Nonotte, there is here where-withal to make a good market.

10. Know that it is Mr. Damilaville, (known among the principal men of letters in Paris, if Nonotte is not) who being hurt at the insolence and the absurdity of your libel entitled, "the errors," hath condescended to publish his sentiments upon it. It is he particularly who has shewn that it is no contradiction to say, that Cromwell was for some time a fanatic, afterwards, a profound politician, and at last, a great man; and that it would be proper to say as much of Mahomet. Know that Cromwell extorted money, pillaged and plundered during his wars, and observed the laws strictly, during peace: that he laid on no new imposts, "that he covered" with the qualities of a great man, the crimes of an "usurper," that he feared with the greatest reason, that he should be assassinated, and that after having taken all the precautions against such an attempt, he did not die the less, with a firmness known to all the world. Mr. Damilaville hath said that there is nothing in all this, incompatible, and that Nonotte has not common sense. Is he wrong?

11. You are ignorant in things the most familiar. You find fault with the respectable author of the general history, for having said that William of Nassau, the founder of the republic of Holland, was count of the empire, with the same title that Philip II, was lord of Anvers. You are quite astonished, that the famous prince of Orange should be placed on a parallel with the *maesta del te don Phillippo el discreto*. You have reason. Philip II. was not comparable to a hero. They were both of an imperial family, the two houses were equally descended from brave gentlemen. Is it because the assassin of the defender of liberty, confessed and communicated before he executed his crime, that you find William guilty? Is it because this hero resisted all the power of an hypocritical poltroon? Is it because he rendered seven provinces free, that the pitiful tree-booter, Nonotte, insults his memory?

12. How ignorant you are! I must again say. You do not know that the borough of Livron in Dauphiny, was a city, at the time of the league when it was destroyed along with many other small cities. And when it was proved to you that it was besieged by Henry III. in person; that the marischal de Bellegarde conducted the siege with twenty-two pieces of cannon in 1574. You answer with a subterfuge, "that you mean to speak of the state of Livron, as it is at present, and not as it has been." You do well to have recourse to the present state of Livron; and you learnedly add, "I have named the commandant Monthrun, who refused to give up the place." You excuse your ignorance by a new error. It was not Monthrun who commanded in this place: It was de Roësses, as de Thou says, book XLIX. You are wrong when you criticise—you are more so when you are guilty of these injuries which are worthy of your education—and still more so, perhaps, when you hope to escape punishment.

13. With what effrontery do you dare to say that M. de Voltaire hath never read the account of the tax of the chancery at Rome. Go into his library, my friend, the footmen will permit you to enter for once, and see you even to the door again. You will find two copies of this book, which he will not by any means lend to you.

14. You will make a man of learning in time, Nonotte; you say, speaking of theology, that Drake discovered the land of Yesso. Know that Drake never went to Japan, much less to Yesso. Know that he died in 1596, in going to Porto-Bello. Know that it was forty years after the death of Drake that the Dutch first discovered the land of Yesso in 1644. Know that the discoverer was captain Martin Jeritson in a vessel named the *Castrécom*. Do you believe that you give any credit to theology by becoming a marine. You deceive yourself by sea and land; and you hug yourself on your book because your errors are in two volumes.

15. Let us see if you understand theology better than naval affairs. The author of the general history has said,

said, that according to St. Thomas, of Aquinas, it was permitted to seculars to confess in urgent cases, that it is not altogether a sacrament, but it is at a sacrament. He has quoted the edition and the page of the Summary of St. Thomas; and afterwards you say, that all critics agree that this part of the Summary of St. Thomas is not his. And I, for my part, I tell you that not one true critic will furnish you with this evasion. I defy you to shew me one Summary of St. Thomas where this monument is not to be found. The Summary was in such veneration that they dared not to add to it the work of another. It was one of the first books that came from the press, in Rome, in 1474: it was printed at Venice in 1484. It was not till the editions of Lyon that they began to doubt whether the third part of the Summary was his. But it is easy to recognise his method and his style which are absolutely the same.

Besides, Thomas did no more than collect the opinions of his time, and we have many other proofs that the laity had a right to confess one another. Witness the famous passage of Joinville, in which he relates that he confessed the constable of Chypre. A jesuit at least ought to know what the jesuit Tolet has said in his book of Sacerdotal Instruction, lib. I. chap. XVI. Neither women nor laymen can absolve without privilege: "*nec femina nec laicus absolvere possunt sine privilegio.*" The pope can therefore permit the women to confess to the men; this will be pleasant enough. You will very much rejoice, Basançon, in confessing your pranks to the old woman whom you frequent and instruct. Will she give you absolution?

I wish to inform you that this ancient custom, this devotion of mutual confession came from Syria. You must know then, Nonotte, that the good Jews sometimes confessed one another. The confessor and the confessed when they were truly penitent, applied, by turns, thirty-nine strokes of the lash to one another's shoulders. Confess yourself often, my good Nonotte; but if you address yourself to a Jacobin, do not attempt to tell him that the Summary of St. Thomas is not his;

—he

—he will not confine himself to thirty-nine strokes of the lash. Confess your girl, and confess yourself to her, and she will whip you easier than a Jacobin, as Girard whipped la Cadière, and vice versa.

16. I am envious to instruct you in the history of the Maid of Orleans, for I love this maid, and many others love her also. This short passage will be useful to the public. They are very little solicitous about your blunders and your quarrels, but they like history. I will draw the facts from cotemporary authors; from the acts of the process of Joan of Arc, and the authentic Memoirs on the Heroine of Orleans.

Paul Jove says, that the courage of the French was animated by this female, and he is far from believing that she was inspired. Neither Robert Gagain nor Paul Emile, Polidore Virgile, Genebrar, Philip de Bergame, Pepire Massan, nor even Marianna, say, that she was sent by God: and if Marianna the Jesuit had said it, he would not in truth have imposed upon me.

Mezerai relates, “that the prince of celestial battles “appeared to her.”—I am pained for Mezerai, and I beg pardon of the prince of celestial battles.

The greatest part of our historians who copy the one from the other, suppose that the maid predicted events, and that they were accomplished. They say that she drove the English out of the kingdom, and yet they were there six years after her death. They make her write a long letter to the King of England, and assuredly she neither could read nor write.—They do not give this education to a servant of an inn in Barois, and the process declares that she could not sign her name.

But, say they, she found a rusty sword, the blade of which was ornamented with five fleurs de lys, wrought in gold, and this sword was concealed in the church of Saint Catherine, of Fierbois, at Tours.—A great miracle indeed!

The poor Joan of Arc being taken by the English in spite of her predictions and her miracles, maintained, on her examination, that St. Catherine and St. Margaret had honoured her with many revelations. I am astonished

nished that there is nothing said of her conversations with the prince of the celestial battles. Apparently, these two saints loved to speak more than St. Michael. Her judges believed her to be a sorceress, and she believed that she was inspired, and it was on this account that it was said,

————— In truth,
Both judge and pleader should be hanged.

A great proof that the captains of Charles VII. employed the marvellous to encourage the soldiery in the deplorable state to which France was reduced; that Saintraille had a shepherd, as the count de Dunois had a shepherdess, who on the one side and the other, made predictions.

But unhappily, the prophets of the count de Dunois was taken at the siege of Compiègne, by an illegitimate son of Vendôme, and the prophet of Saintrailles was taken by Talbot. The brave Talbot did not burn the shepherd. Talbot was one of those true Englishmen who disdain superstitions, and who have not fanaticism enough, to punish fanatics.

This is what it appears to me, the historians ought to have observed, and which they have neglected.

The maid was carried before John of Luxembourg, count de Ligny; she was shut up in the fortress of Beaulieu, afterwards in that of Beurevoir, and finally, in that of Crotoy in Picardy.

Soon, Peter Cauchon bishop of Beauvais, who was a partisan of the king of England, against his lawful sovereign, claimed the maid as a sorceress; seized within the limits of his metropolitan. He wished to try her as a sorceress. He supported his pretended right by an egregious falsehood. Joan having been taken in the bishoprick of Noyon, and assuredly, neither the bishop of Beauvais, nor the bishop of Noyon had the right to condemn any person, and much less to deliver to death a subject of the duke of Lorraine, and a warrior in the pay of the king of France.

There was then, (who would believe it?) a vicar general of the inquisition in France, named brother Martin. This was one of the horrible effects of the total sub-

subversion of this unhappy country. Brother Martin reclaimed the prisoner, as an adorer of heresy, "adorentem hæresim." He summoned the duke de Bourgogne and the count de Ligny, "by the right of his office, and the authority committed to him, by the holy see, to deliver Joan to the holy inquisition."

The Sorbonne hastened to second brother Martin. They wrote to the duke of Bourgogne, and to John of Luxembourg. "You have employed your noble power to apprehend this woman, who calls herself a maid, by whose means, the honour of God hath been beyond measure offended, the faith exceedingly wounded, and the church very much disgraced; for through her, idolatry, errors, false doctrines, and other inestimable evils have overspread this country; but very little good will arise from having taken her, if the proper means are not pursued, to make satisfaction, for the offence that she has committed against our gracious Saviour and his faith, and the holy church, and for her other innumerable misdeeds. If it shall be found an intolerable offence against the divine Majesty, the woman must be delivered up to punishment."

In fine, the maid was delivered to Peter Cauchon, who was called a worthless bishop, a worthless Frenchman, and a worthless man. John de Luxembourg sold the maid to Cauchon and the English, for ten thousand livres, and the duke of Bedford paid him. The Sorbonne, the bishop and brother Martin, presented then, a new request to the duke of Bedford, regent of France. "In honour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for whom this Joan was delivered over to the justice of the church." Joan was conducted to Rouen. The archbishopric was then vacant, and the chapter permitted the bishop of Beauvais to labour in the city. (this is the term which was made use of.)

He chose for his assistants, nine doctors of the Sorbonne, with thirty five others, abbés or monks. The vicar of the inquisition, Martin presided along with

Cau-

Cauchon; and as he was no more than a vicar, he sat in the second place.

There were fourteen examinations, and they were singular. She said that she had seen St. Catherine and St. Margaret at Poitiers. The doctor Beaupere demanded of her, by what means she recognized the two saints? she answered, by the manner in which they accosted her. Beaupere asked her if they were good talkers. "Go! said she, and search the register." Beaupere asked her if St. Michael was naked when she saw him. She answered, do you think that our Lord has not wherewithal to cover his nakedness.

How ridiculous! how horrible!

One of her judges, a doctor in theology, and a priest named Nicholas the bird-catcher, came to confess her in prison. He abused the sacrament, by concealing behind a screen, two priests, who transcribed the confession of Joan. Thus the judges employed sacrilege, to become homicides. And one unfortunate idiot, who had courage to render the most essential services to her king and country, was condemned to be burnt by forty French priests, who joined themselves to the English party.

It is well known with what low artifice, they placed in her eye the apparel of a man, to tempt her to re-assume that habit, and with what barbarous absurdity they made this a pretext for condemning her to the flames, as if it was, in a warlike female, a crime worthy of the flames, to wear a pair of breeches, instead of a petticoat. All this tears the heart, and shocks common sense. I cannot conceive how we dare, after the innumerable horrors of which we have been guilty, give to any people the name of barbarians.

The greatest part of our historians, more the lovers of pretended embellishments of history, than of truth, say that Joan went to punishment with intrepidity; but as the chronicles of the time assert, and as M. de Villaret declares, she received her arret with cries and tears; a pardonable weakness in her sex, and perhaps in ours, and very compatible with the courage which this female had displayed in the dangers of the war; for one may
perhap

perhaps be hardy in battle, and yet be terrified at the flames.

I ought to add, that many persons have believed without investigating the matter, that the maid of Orleans was not burnt at Rouen, although we have the most accurate account of her execution. They have been deceived by the relation that we have also, of an adventures who took the name of the maid, deceived the brothers of Joan of Arc, and by this imposture married in Lorraine, a gentleman of the house of Armoises. There were also two other cheats, who attempted to pass for the maid of Orleans. All the three pretended that they had not burnt Joan, but that they had substituted another woman. Such tales, however, cannot be admitted, but by those who wish to be deceived.

Learn, Nonotte, how we must study history when we attempt to speak of it. Do not make of Joan of Arc, a female inspired by heaven, but a resolute ideot, who fancied that she was inspired. A village heroine, who played a great part; a brave female, whom the inquisitors and the doctors burnt with the most cowardly cruelty. Correct your errors, and do not any more place them to the account of others. Remember the Capuchin, who being mounted in the pulpit, said to his auditors, "My brethren, my design was to speak to you of the immaculate conception, but I have seen affixed to the gate of the church, "Reflections on the faults of another, by the R. P. de Villiers, of the society of Jesus. Ah! my friend! make reflections on your own faults. I shall therefore speak to you of humility."

You burst with vanity, Nonotte; it does you honour to answer you; but to inspire you with a little modesty, know that the illustrious Montesquieu condescended to answer the author of ecclesiastical news, as the marischal de la Feuillade once beat a hackney coachman, who blocked up the way when he was driving in the height of fortune.

17. Nonotte, you wish to embroil the author of the
age

age of Louis XIV. with the clergy of France. This may pass for rally. "There are not, say you, at page 224, "any men so contemptible as those, who form this "numerous body," and after having obtruded these abominable words, you impute them to the author of the age of Louis XIV. Know you what you deserve for this? calumniating Nonotte!

The author of the Age of Louis XIV. hath always revered the clergy, as a good citizen ought; he has defended them against the imputations of those who say at random, that they engross the whole revenue of the kingdom. He has proved in his chap. XXXV. that all the French church, secular and regular, does not possess above eight millions of revenue in funds and casualties. He remarks that the clergy have assisted the state with about four millions a year on an average. He has overlooked no occasion of doing justice to the body.

We find in chap. IV. of the Treatise on Toleration, these words, "The class of bishops in France is almost "always composed of men of quality, who think, and "who act with a nobility becoming their birth." Is this to insult the bishops of France as you outrage them?

Does he insult the bishops of France when he speaks of the bishop of Marseilles in an ode against Fanaticism?

Belzuns ce pasteur vénérable
Sauvait son peuple périssant;
Langeron guerrier secourable
Bravait un péril renaissant;
Tandis que vos lâches cabales
Dans le trouble et dans les scandales
Occupaient votre oisiveté,
De la dispute ridicule
Et sur Quesnel et sur la bulle
Qu'oubliera la postérité.

M I S C E L L A N I E S

Ex-jesuit! this was to do justice to a worthy bishop. —He has done justice to you, and to the ancient brothers of Nonotte; to you, le Tellier, Lallemonet and Doucin, who attended the bishops in the low hall with the brother Vadble, while you fabricated the bull, that hath finally extirminated your seat.

You dare to say that the author of the Age of Louis XIV. has never failed to turn the popes into ridicule and to render them odious.

But see the praises that he has given to the wisdom of Adrian I. See how he has justified pope Honorius, so much accused of heresy—see what he has said of Leo IV. in vol. I. of the Essay on the Spirit and the Manners of Nations.

“ Pope Leo IV. assuming in this danger, an authority which the generals of the emperor Lothario, seemed to have abandoned, shewed himself to be worthy, in defending Rome, of commanding as a sovereign. He employed the treasures of the church in repairing the walls of the city, in raising towers, and in chaining the tiber. He armed the military at his own expence, engaged the inhabitants of Naples and Gajeta to come and defend the frontiers and the harbour of Ostia, not failing at the same time to use the precaution of taking hostages from them, under the conviction that those who are powerful enough to protect may be able to destroy. He visited, himself all the posts, and met the Saracens in their descent, not in the accoutrements of a warrior, as Goslin, bishop of Paris, had done on an occasion much more momentous, but as a pontiff who exhorted a christian people, and as a king who was anxious for the safety of his subjects. He was born a Roman. The courage of the first ages of the republic revived in him in an age of cowardice and corruption; as one of the finest ornaments of ancient Rome is at times discovered in the ruins of the new.”

He has extended his love for truth to the justification of the memory even of an Alexander VI. against the crowd

crowd of accusers who pretend that this pope died of a poison prepared by himself for the purpose of destroying all the cardinals his guests. He has not been afraid of encountering the public opinion, and striking out one crime from the number, of which this pope has been convicted. He has never considered, nor cherished, nor spoken any thing but truth. He has been in search of it for fifty years. You, for your part, have never once discovered it.

You are hurt that pope Bennet XIV. hath written to him many agreeable letters, and hath sent to him golden medals and agnuses in dozens! you are hurt that his successor should have obliged him, by the hands of a great minister, with many valuable relicks to ornament the parochial church that he has built! Console yourself, Nonotte; and come, and serve mass with one of your fellow servants who is almoner of the castle. It is true that the master of the house will not walk in the procession behind a young Jesuit, as they do in the city of Mantauban: he is not of this taste; but you will find two Jesuits. “*Sœpe premente deo fert deus*” “alter opem.”

In fine, Nonotte, you employ the artillery of the Garassès and the Hardouins, “*ultima ratio Jesuitarum, et aliquando Jansenistarum.*” You treat as an atheist the most resigned adorer of the divinity. You enter this accusation against the author of the *Henriade*, a poem which is the triumph of the Catholic religion; you bring it against the author of *Zara* and *Alzira*, of which this religion is the ground; against him who having adopted the niece of the great Corneille, did not receive her into any of his houses situated within the limits of Geneva, that she might not be restrained in the free exercise of the Catholic religion. You knew this, as your accomplices, for the sake of gaining a little money, published the letter, where it is said expressly, that the young lady shall in the Protestant country, have every assistance and opportunity to exercise the Catholic religion; you do not consider that you

have furnished the world with arms against yourself and your accomplices.

It is thus that the Nonottes, the Patouillots, and other Jesuits, have treated as atheists the most respectable and eloquent of our magistrates, the Monclars, the Chauvelins, the la Chalotais, the Duchés, the Castillons, and many others. But at the same time it must be considered that those gentlemen have done them more harm than Mr. de Voltaire has.

After the exposure of the blunders, the insolencies, and the atrocious injuries lavished by Nonotte, and his associates, my readers will perhaps be pleased to know, who the authors of the many libels against the French magistracy are. The following letter from a gentleman of the place, written from Besançon, January 9, 1767, will instruct them.

“ James Nonotte, aged 54 years, was born at Besançon, of a poor man who was a cleaver of wood and a porter. He appears by his stile and his conduct that he has not degenerated. His mother was a washerwoman. The little James having practised the trade of his father at the gate of the Jesuits, and having shewn some disposition for study, was taken notice of by them, and was a Jesuit at the age of twenty. He was placed at Avignon in 1759. It was there that he began, with some of his brethren, to compile his libel against the general history, and against you.

“ The printer Fez threw off eleven hundred copies. The sale of which however not having answered their expectations, Fez complained heavily, and the Jesuits were obliged to take the edition for their account. You have condescended, Sir, to lower yourself by answering this rascally publication; this has made it known, and has encouraged Nonotte and his associates to bring out a second edition full of the most contemptible aspersions, and which indeed deserve the severest punishment. The Jesuitical sect hath printed this edition, clandestinely, at Lyons, in contempt of the ordinances.

“ Nonotte

“ Nonotte is actually suffered to remain because unknown in this city. He lives in a third floor, and he abuses in a most despotic manner an old woman who lives with him, and who has written to you. He says he is employed on an anti-philosophical dictionary, which ought to appear next season. I believe that it will be in fact an anti-reasonable one. You see that the members of the viper when cut in pieces and dispersed, yet retain a portion of their venom. This contemptible fellow is an excrement of the college that will never be made clean, &c.”

We preserve the original of this letter.

If Nonotte has his critics, he has also men of taste for his partisans. M. de Voltaire has received a letter dated from Hennebon in Brittany, the 18th November 1766, signed “The Chevalier Brulé.” He has been good enough to communicate it to us. The following is a copy; it is admirable verse.

L'orgueil du philosophe avait bercé Voltaire,
 Dans la flatteuse idée, mais par trop téméraire,
 De mériter un nom par dessus tous les noms.
 Le voilà bien déchu de sa présomption.
 David avec sa fronde a terrassé Goliath.

And this too is written, after it is said that there are no more Jesuits in France. The chevalier de Brulé is apparently a disciple of Nonotte. Do not the Jesuits instruct their youth well?

SHORT DIGRESSION,

WHICH CONTAINS AN USEFUL REFLECTION ON PART
OF THE TWENTY TWO PRECEDING CIVILITIES.

WHAT is the source of this rage of these little authors, ex jesuits, convulsionists, banished preceptors, gentlemen with bands without benefices, priors, casuists in theology, play-wrights, ballad singers, and venders of mandates and sermons? From whence comes it that they attack the first men of literature with a fury so absurd? Why do they constantly call Paschal "the porter of hell,"—Nichol, "a ravaging wolf,"—and d'Alembert "a stinking beast?" Wherefore, when a work succeeds, do they call the author an heretic, a deist, or an atheist? Their pretension to fine taste and genius is the great cause of this epidemic malady.

It is not certainly for the purpose of rendering service to the catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion, that they proclaim that the first mathematicians of the age, the first philosophers, the greatest poets and orators, the exactest historians, the magistrates most learned in the laws, and the officers of the army the most intelligent, do not believe in the catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion, against which the imps of hell will never prevail. It would be clear that the imps of hell have prevailed, if it were true that all the most enlightened men in Europe, in secret, detest this religion. These miserable reasoners render to themselves, therefore, a very untoward service, when they say that every thinking man is their enemy.

They

They strive themselves, to decry the religion, by seeking for the most illustrious names who do decry it. It is said in the errors of Nonotte, and corroborated by another good man, who assisted him, page 118. "That in truth M. de Voltaire never challenged the authority of the scriptures; and that he has always shewn respect towards them, but that this does not prevent him from laughing at them in his heart;" and from this he concludes, that all the world do as much, and that he Nonotte, can also by evasions throw out his disregard for them.

Impious Nonotte! blaspheming Nonotte! let us pray God, my readers, to convert him!

That which principally damns Nonotte, Patouillet, and their associates, is precisely that which hath sent brother Berthier to purgatory; the rage of being thought men of genius. Could it be believed that Nonotte, in his theological libel, found fault with the author of the age of Louis XIV. for having placed Quinault in the rank of the great men? Nonotte finds Quinault to be low: wherefore! he does not love the author of *Atis* and *Armida*! so much the worse, Nonotte, it proves that you have a very dull soul, and no ear, or very bad ears.

Non fa che cosa è amor, non fa che vaglia

La caritade e quindi advien che i frati

Sono sì ingorda e sì crudel' canaglia.

ARIOSTO, epistle on marriage.

Behold then the ex-reverend Nonotte, who in a dogmatical book weighed the merits of Quinault in a balance. The bishop of Puy in Velay, addressed to the inhabitants of Puy, an enormous pastoral, in which he speaks to them of the belles lettres. "Be therefore philosophers, my good brethren," says he to the braziers of Velay, in page 299. But remark that he does not speak to them thus by the organ of the secretary Cortia; after having spoken to them of Perrault,

of la Motte, of the abbé Teraſſon, and of Boindin; after having outraged the aſhes of Fontenelle; after having quoted Bacon, Galileo, Deſcartes, Mallebranche, Leibnitz, Newton, and Locke. The good people of Puy took theſe men for the fathers of the church. Cortiat examines, page 23, if Boileau was no more than a mere verſifier, and page 77, if bodies do not gravitate towards the centre. In the mandate under the name of I. F. archbiſhop of Auch, it is conſidered, whether a poet ought not to confine himſelf to one talent, or to cultivate ſeveral.

Ah! gentlemen, non erat his locus. Your flocks of Auch and of Velay do not trouble themſelves, either with verſe or philoſophy. — They know no more than yourſelves what conſtitutes a poet, and what a philoſopher. Speak therefore in future, the language of your ſheep-fold.

You wiſh to paſs for men of taſte, and you ceaſe to be ſhepherds. You give the world reaſon for not reſpecting your characters. They judge of you as la Motte and Teraſſon judged in a coffee-houſe. If you wiſh to be biſhops, imitate St. Paul; he neither ſpoke of Homer nor of Lycophron; he did not enquire, whether Xenophon was the friend of Thucydides; he ſpoke of charity. “Charity,” ſays he, “is patient,” be you therefore patient; “patience is benign,” be you benign; “benignity is not ambitious.” Have you not been envious of raiſing yourſelves by your ſtile? that is no crime, but have you not inſerted a portion of malignity into your pastorals?

Good ſhepherds! feed your ſheep in quiet, and let us return to our mutton, to our literary civilities.

CIVILITY XXIII.

One of the moſt agreeable kind.

An ex-jeſuit named Patouillet, already celebrated in this work, a gentle and a peaceable man, being ordered for imprifonment, on account of a very learned libel againſt the Parliament, took refuge at Auch, in the
houſe

house of the archbishop, with one of his associates. The two ex-jesuits fabricated a pastoral in 1764, and seduced the archbishop to publish under his name, this apostolic piece, which attacked all the senators of the kingdom. See how the pastoral expresses itself on them, page 48. "These enemies of heaven, a thousand times overthrown by its power, as often raised again by the basest intrigues, constantly animated by the blackest rage, &c." There is hardly a page where these two jesuits do not exhale against the senators, a rage of the deepest dye. This defamatory libel was condemned to be burnt by the hands of the hangman. A search was made after the authors, but they had escaped from human justice.

It is necessary to observe, that these two pastoral makers had imagined, that an officer of the king's household (who had from age and infirmity, after thirty years service, retired to his country seat) had contributed, from the corner of his fire side, to the destruction of the Jesuits. It was a thing not very probable, but they believed it; and they did not fail to say in the mandate, according to custom, that this wicked old man was a deist and an atheist; that he was a vagabond, who in truth scarcely ever left his bed, but who, in his heart wished to run about as one; that he was a vile mercenary wretch, who had procured many girls good husbands, by giving them portions, but who had gained in the course of eleven years, four hundred thousand livres, in conjunction with the editors, to whom he had given his works, and with the comedians of Paris, to whom he abandoned the entire profit, "mammonæ iniquitatis."

In short, Mr. J. F. of Auch, treats this lord of many parishes, which are far distant from his diocese, and exceedingly well governed, as the vilest of men, and as if he had had in his eye, a member of parliament. A relation of the archbishop, to whom this officer of the king condescended, even at this time, to lend money, wrote to M. d'Auch, that he had suffered himself to be

surprised; that he had dishonoured himself; that he ought to make a public reparation; that he, his relation could not dare any more to appear before the offended party; "I am not in condition, says he in his letter, to pay him what he generously lent me. Do you therefore pay me what you have owed me so long, that I may be enabled to satisfy my debt."

M. d'Auch was so shameful in his conduct, as not to answer this letter. The numerous family of the old officer answered his silence by the following epistle, which was sent from Paris, directed to M. d'Auch.

To M. the ARCHBISHOP of AUCH.

"There appeared under your name, Sir, in 1764, a pastoral instruction, which unhappily is no other than a defamatory libel. You stand up in this work, against the proceedings registered by the parliament of Paris; you regard the jesuits as martyrs, and the senators as their persecutors*: you accuse of injustice, the king's edict which irrevocably banishes the jesuits from the kingdom. This pastoral instruction has been burnt by the hand of the common hangman. The king hath restrained the profligate attempts by his authority. The ministers of parliament know how to punish them. But the citizens who have been attacked, with so much insolence in this libel, have no other resource than that of refuting the calumnies. You have dared to insult virtuous men, whom you have not the honour to be acquainted with; you have, above all, most unworthily outraged a citizen, who lives an hundred and fifty leagues distant from you. You say to the people of the diocesan of Auch, that this citizen, an officer of the king, and a member of a body for whom you ought to have respect, is a vagabond, and a fugitive of the kingdom, although he has resided for fifteen years on his own estate, where he does in-

* Our fathers have instructed us to respect the Jesuits, &c. see page 35, and the following of the mandate of M. d'Auch.

"finitely

" finitely more good than you do in your diocesan, who
 " are so much richer than him. You treat him as a mer-
 " cenary wretch, at the time even, when he has given
 " the most generous assistance to your nephew, whose
 " estate lies in the vicinity of his. Thus you crown
 " your calumnies by baseness and ingratitude. If it is
 " a Jesuit who is the author of your pamphlet, as is ge-
 " nerally believed, you are much to be pitied for having
 " signed it. If you yourself are the author of it,
 " which is not believed to be the case, you are still to be
 " pitied. You know all that your relations, and that
 " men of honour have written to you on the scandal
 " that you have brought upon yourself, in having for-
 " ever dishonoured the episcopate, and in having ren-
 " dered it contemptible, if it can be so. They have ex-
 " hausted all the resources of civility, to make you re-
 " sume yourself. It now only remains to a considerable
 " family so insolently outraged, to proclaim the au-
 " thor of the libel a scoundrel, whom they disdain to
 " punish, but whom they ought to render notorious.
 " They wish not to suspect that you could compose this
 " chain of infamies, in which there appears some sha-
 " dow of false erudition. But whoever is the abomi-
 " nable author, they will answer him in no other way
 " than by serving the religion which he disgraces, by
 " continuing to do good, and by praying to God to con-
 " vert a soul so perverse, and so cowardly, if it is pos-
 " sible that a calumniator can be converted."

A

MORAL REFLECTION.

IT is a matter worthy the consideration of a wise man, that the fury, with which the jesuits have attacked the jansenists, and the fury that both these parties have employed to ruin one another, has now united and spent itself on the men of letters. These are the disbanded soldiers who have become highway robbers. The jesuit expelled from his college, the convulsionist escaped from the hospital, wander each in this way, and not being able any longer to bite themselves, fall upon all the travellers they meet with.

This madness is not particular to them. It is a malady of the schools. It is the small pox of theology. The miserable casuists have no honest profession. A good joiner, a sculptor, a taylor, a watchmaker, are all useful, and maintain their families by their art. The father of Nonotte was a brave and renowned wood-cutter of Bensançen. Would it not have been much better for his son to cut wood honestly, than to go from bookseller to bookseller, to discover some dupe that would print his libels? We stand in need of Nonotte the father, but not at all of Nonotte the son. Those with whom he happens to enter into a controversy (good for nothing it must be) are condemned to stand in his filth all their lives, and because he may have seduced some old idiot to doat upon him, he believes that he is a Chrysostom, or an Ambrose, while all the boys in the street laugh at him. O! brother Nonotte, brother Pichon, brother Duplessis! your time is past. You resemble the old actors, who, employed no longer in the chorus

chorus of the opera, go and sing old songs on the pont neuf to obtain charity. Believe me, poor folks, a better means of obtaining a subsistence, would be, not to sing at all.

CIVILITY XXIV.

One of the most indifferent kind.

An abbé Guion, who wrote a history of the low empire, in a stile that accorded with the title, became disgusted with writing history, and set himself a few years ago, to write a romance. He went, he says, to a castle which does not exist; he was very well received there, a circumstance, to which he is seldom accustomed: the master of the house, whom he had never seen, confides to him, immediately after dinner, all his secrets. He confesses to him, that Mr. B. is an heretic, Mr. C. a deist, Mr. D. a focinian, Mr. F. an atheist, and Mr. G. something worse, and for himself, the lord of the mansion, he had the honour to be antichrist; and he offered him a pair of colours in the army, under the command of Messieurs Da, de, di, do, du, his captains. He says, that he found very good chear with antichrist; good chear was in truth one of the characters of his lordship, and that by which in part, he seduced his profelytes.

The abbé Guion speaking afterwards of Louis XIV. says, that this monarch “never went to war without accomplishing many brilliant atchievements; but that “his medallion has two faces.” He adds, that in the latter years of this prince, there is nothing interesting to be found, “unless the eighty millions of livres which “Madame de Maintenon obtained as a pension, on the “death of this monarch.” This is the manner in which the pitiful Guion writes history. Let us leave him to fill the part of Almoner to antichrist, and speak no more of him.

CIVILITY XXV.

A very slight one.

This twenty-fifth civility, is that of one named Larnet, the sorry preacher of a village near Carcassonne

cassonne in Languedoc. This preacher wrote a libel, in letters, against seven or eight persons, whom he did not know, and dedicated it to a nobleman, whom he knew still less. These letter-writers have always correspondents, as poets have Phillises and Amaranthas in the air. Larnet begins, by saying, page 50, that it is the pope who is antichrist. O! gentlemen, how much you disagree! for the abbé Guion assures us that he saw antichrist in his castle near Lausanne. But antichrist cannot have a see both at Lausanne and at Rome: he must make a choice, for it is not one of the properties of antichrist to be in many places at the same time.

The preacher called to his assistance, the poor Michael Servet, who assured us that antichrist kept his see at Rome. If this was the opinion of the wise Servet, the wise preachers must not fail to burn him; but

Servet is dead, rest his bones in peace!

Or burn both him and Larnet if you please.

It is equal to me. What this Larnet, preacher of Carcassonne in Languedoc has said, is rather tedious, but yet he has some friends. Mr. Robert Covelle, who plays, as is universally acknowledged, a great part in literature, is particularly attached to him. In the last journey that Mr. Covelle made to Carcassonne, dedicated a petit piece of poetry, to his friend Larnet. This epistle is not polished. M. Covelle is a man fond of good company, who hates trouble, and who may say with Chapelle

Tout bon fainéant du marais,

Fait des vers qui ne coûtent guères.

Pour moi c'est ainsi que j'en fais,

Et si je les voulais mieux faire,

Je les ferais bien plus mauvais.

CIVILITY XXVI.

"You are an impudent fellow, a liar, falsifier, a traitor who have dared to impute to the English the pitiful verses that you say you have translated into the French. You are the sole author of these abominable verses; and more than this, you never understood either Lock or Newton; for brother Berthier says that you seek the trisection of the angle by ordinary geometry."

These are almost the words of the Nonottes, the Patouilletts, the Guions, &c. to this poor old man, who is not in a state to answer them. I constantly take his part as it is my duty to do. The greatest part of the men of letters abandon their friends when they are pillaged and hurt. They resemble very much those animals, who are said to be the friends of man, and who when they see one of their companions lying wounded and dead in the highway, lave his blood, and pass on without any remembrance of the defunct. I am not of this character; I defend my friend, "*unguibus et rostro*."

Mr. Middleton, to whom we are indebted for the life of Cicero, and other very curious detached pieces of literature, having lived in France in his youth, wrote some very beautiful verses on what he saw in our country. The following lines were prefixed to the collection which he published.

A nation here I pity and admire,
Whom noblest sentiments of glory fire;
Yet taught by custom's force, and bigot fear,
To serve with pride, and boast the yoke they bear.
Where nobles born to cringe, and to command,
In courts, a mean; in camps, a generous band.
From priests, and tax-jobbers, content, receive
Those laws, their dreaded arms to Europe give. †
Where people, vain in want, in bondage blest,
Tho' plunder'd, gay; industrious tho' oppress'd,

† It was in the war of 1689.

With

With happy follies rise above their fate,
The jest and envy of each wiser state.

Yet here the Muses deign'd awhile to sport
In the short sunshine of a fav'ring court;
Here Boileau strong in sense, and sharp in wit,
Who from the antients, like the antients writ,
Permission gain'd inferior vice to blame,
By burning incense to his master's fame.

With more delight those pleasing shades I view,
Where Condé from an envious court withdrew,
Where sick of glory, faction, power, and pride,
(Sure judge how empty all, who all had tried)
Beneath his palms the wary chief repos'd,
And life's great scene in quiet virtue clos'd.

Now, see how faithfully my friend M. de Voltaire has translated this excellent piece, faithfully as a translation into verse can be so.

Tel est l'esprit Français ; je l'admire et le plains.
Dans son abaissement quel excès de courage !
La tête sous le joug, les lauriers dans les mains,
Il chérit à la fois la gloire et l'esclavage.
Ses exploits et sa honte ont rempli l'univers.
Vainqueur dans les combats, enchainé par sa maitree,
Pillé par des traitans, aveuglé par des prêtres,
Dans la disette il chante, il danse avec ses fers.
Fier dans la servitude, heureux dans sa folie,
De l'Anglais libre et sage, il est encor l'envie.

Les muses cependant ont habité ces bords,
Lorsqu'à leurs favoris prodiguant ses trésors,
Louis encourageait l'imitateur d'Horace ;
Ce Boileau plein de sel, encor plus que de grace,

Cour-

Courtisan fatyrique, ayant le double emploi
De censeur des Cotins, et de flatteur du roi.

Mais je l'aime encor mieux, ô respectable aïe !
Chantilli, des héros séjour noble et tranquile,
Lieu où l'on vit Condé fuyant de vains honneurs,
Lassé de factions, de gloire, et de grandeurs,
Caché sous ses lauriers, déroband sa vieillesse
Aux dangers d'une cour infidelle et traïtresse,
Ayant éprouvé tout, dire avec vérité,
Rien ne remplit le cœur, et tout est vanité.

I confess that these French verses cannot have all the energy of the English. Alas! it is the fate of translators in all languages to be beneath their originals.

I own also that there are some of Mr. Midleton's thoughts injurious to the French nation. M. de Voltaire hath modestly thrown out these reflections according to his usual custom.

So much with regard to the verse. As to the trifsection of the angle, the refutation of that charge would fatigue the ladies, whom we must always treat with delicacy.

If there should pass any new compliments and civilities in the turbulent republic of letters, advise us of it, and ample though brief justice shall be rendered.

A LET-

M I S C E L L A N I E S

A
L E T T E R
T O T H E
A U T H O R

OF THE
L I T E R A R Y C I V I L I T I E S,
ON THE MEMOIRS OF MADAME DE MAINTENON,

PUBLISHED BY LA BEAUMELLE.

WE cannot read without some indignation the "Memoirs to serve for the history of Madame de Maintenon, and of the late age." These are five volumes of antitheses and lies; and the author is much more culpable than ridiculous, since having printed the letters of Madame de Maintenon, of which he swindled a copy, he ought to have given a true history, founded on these letters, and on the authentic memoirs of which we are in possession: but literature being become the vile object of a dirty traffic, the author's only care was to swell his book, and to gain money at the expence of truth. We must regard his book as we do the Memoirs of Gratiem de Courtills, and the many other libels, which were sold in their time, and which are now fallen into the lowest contempt. The author begins with a portrait of the society of Madame Scarron, as if he had lived with her. He places in this society M. de Charlevel, whom he calls the most elegant of our neglected

lected poets, and of whom we have no more than three or four pieces of the most indifferent kind. He associates also the Count de Coligny, who, he says, "had been at Paris the profelyte of Ninon, and at court the rival of the prince de Condé." In what could the Count de Coligny be the rival of the Prince de Condé? what rivalship of rank, of glory, and of respect could there be between the first prince of the blood, celebrated in Europe by three victories, and a gentleman who was hardly distinguished? He adds, to this pretended society, the Marquis de la Sablière, "who had," says he, "in conversation all the superficial lightness of a woman." La Sablière was a citizen of Paris, and no marquis; and who, pray, has informed the author that La Sablière was so insipid in his conversation?

Does it very well become this writer to say, "that the assemblies which were held in the house of Scarron, did not resemble those literary coteries in which the Marchioness de Lambert seems to have formed a design to destroy good taste?" Did this author know Madame de Lambert? that she was a most respectable lady? did he ever approach her? and is it for him to talk of taste?

Wherefore is it, says he, that in the house of Scarron, they frequently overturned the decrees of the Academy? There is not in all the works of Scarron one circumstance which can give the Academy any cause for murmur. Do we not discover therefore in these satirical reflections, so foreign to his subject, a young hot-headed provincial writer, who fancies that he will give himself consequence, by affecting a contempt for a body composed of the first men of the state, and the first of literature?

How could he have so little modesty as to repeat an infamous song of Scarron against his wife, in a work which he pretends to have undertaken for the sake of praising this same wife, and for deserving the approbation of the house of Cyr? He attributes also to Madame de Maintenon many pieces of poetry which he knows

to have been written by the abbé Tetu, and others which he knows to have been M. de Fieuber's. We see, at every page, a man who speaks, at hazard, of a country which he never knew, and whose only intention seems to be to write a romance.

“ Mademoiselle de la Valliere in a slight dishabille
 “ was set in an easy chair; she there indulged, at lei-
 “ sure, thoughts of her lover. Often would the re-
 “ turning day find her sitting in a chair, leaning her
 “ cheek upon her hand, supported by a table, with her
 “ eye fixed in an extasy of love.” What! my friend,
 have you seen her in this slight dishabille? Have you
 seen her reclined on the table? and is it allowable to
 write history in this manner?

This romance-writer, under the pretence of giving the memoirs of Madame de Maintenon, speaks of events in which Madame de Maintenon had not the smallest concern. He multiplies these pretended memoirs with the adventures of Mademoiselle and the Count de Lauſan. Could it be believed that he would have had the confidence to quote the Memoirs of Mademoiselle, and to suppose the facts which are not to be found in the memoirs? He declares the following, to be the words of Mademoiselle, “ She declared her
 “ passion to him,” says he, “ by a billet which she de-
 “ livered into his hand in the Louvre, in the face of his
 “ two domestics in 1671; he read in it these words,—
 “ It is the Count of Lauſan whom I love, and whom
 “ I wish to marry.” He quotes the Memoirs of Montpensier, vol. VI. page 53. There is not a word of this in the Memoirs of Montpensier. Mademoiselle wrote on a piece of paper these two words “ C'est vous.” It is you,—and nothing more. We must know more of this princess than La Beaumelle. The presence of the two domestics is very agreeable to, and is in the true stile, of history.

That which is the most ridiculous, is the account of the conversations which the author supposes to have taken place between the king, Madame de Montespan, and

and the wife of Scarron, as if he had been present at them. "Louis," says he, "could not brook to hear the truth from the tongue of ridicule in the one, while Madame de Maintenon knew well how to wrap it up in silken words.

"Madame de Maintenon," says he, "knew that the intrigues and the apprehensions of Madame de Montespan had saved Holland." Where has he discovered that Madame de Montespan saved Holland, "which was about to be invaded, had not the Dutch had time to break down their banks, and lay the country under water?"

How did he dare to say that when Madame de Maintenon carried the Duke de Maine to Barege, she said to the Marischal d'Albert, on seeing the Chateau-Trompette, "See, where I was born; but I know a severer prison, and my bed is not softer than my cradle." All the world knows that she was born at Niort, and not at Bourdeaux, and that she was not born in the Chateau-Trompette? How can he have contrived to accumulate so many absurdities and lies?

He makes Madame de Maintenon say to Madame de Montespan, "I dreamt that we were both on the grand staircase of Versailles—I mounted, you descended—I raised myself to the clouds, and you went as low as Fontevrault." It is rather difficult, one should think, to rise to the clouds by means of a flight of stairs. This story is copied from an ancient anecdote of the Duke d'Epemon, who, mounting the stair of St. Germain, met the Cardinal de Richlieu, whose power was then beginning to be established: the Cardinal asked him if there were any news? "Yes," says he to him, "you mount and I descend." Our romancer quotes the letters of Madame de Savigné, and there is not one word in these letters of the pretended dream of Madame de Maintenon.

He must have been very hardy, and believed his readers to be very weak, to have dared to say that in

1681, the Duke of Lorrain sent to Madamoiselle, a secret agent, disguised as a beggar, who demanding alms of her in the church, delivered to her a letter from this prince, in which he demanded her in marriage.— We know well that this story is taken from the history of Clotilda, a history almost as false in every part as the Memoirs of Maintenon. We know well that Madamoiselle would not have omitted so singular an event in her memoirs, and that she does not speak a word of it. We know that if the Duke of Lorrain had made such propositions, he could easily have contrived to do so without the assistance of a man disguised as a beggar. Beside, in 1681, Charles Duke of Lorrain, was married to Maria-Eleonora, daughter to the Emperor Ferdinand III. and widow of Michael king of Poland. It is scarce possible to publish a set of impostures more absurd and more ridiculous.

He makes Madame d'Aguillon say, “my nephews proceed from bad to worse; the elder married the widow of a man whom no one knew; the second married the daughter of one of the queen’s servants; I hope that the third will marry the daughter of a hangman.” Is it possible that a man from among the dregs of the people, should write in the midst of his province, matters so extravagant and so outrageous against so respectable a house, and this too without the least probability, and with an insolence to which no former libel dared to approach? This man, so destitute of common sense, says in justification of Louis the XIVth’s passion for Madame de Maintenon, “that Cleopatra, though already old, enchained Augustus, and that Henry II. burnt for his father’s mistress.” There is nothing so well known in the Roman history, as the conduct of Augustus and Cleopatra; that he wished to lead her to Rome in the suite of his triumphal car. Not one historian hath suspected him of the smallest weakness for Cleopatra. And in regard to Henry II. who burnt for the Dutchess of Valentinois, it has never been averred by any serious historian that she was the mistress

mistress of Francis I. They suspected the truth of the circumstance, and Mezeray says lightly, "that St. Veller had mercy extended to him when brought to the pile, on account of the beauty of Diana his only daughter;" but she was then no more than fourteen years of age, and if she had really been the King's mistress, Brantom would not have omitted the anecdote.

This falsifier of all history quotes Gourville, who reproaches the prince of Orange with having fought the battle of St. Dennis, while he had the peace in his pocket; but he forgets that this same Gourville says, page 222 of his memoirs, that the prince of Orange did not receive the treaty till the day after the engagement.

He tells us confidently "that the Parliament of England had proposed this question at the time of the flight of James II." "Have a people a right to revolt against the authority which strives to impose a creed upon them?" never was this question proposed, nor do we find any part of it. The question was to know if the king of England had a right to dispense with the established laws against the non-conformists. It is precisely contrary to what this author asserts.

He has related a pretended letter of Louis XIV. written about the year 1698 to the prince of Orange after he was king of England, conceived in these terms, "I have received the letter in which you demand my friendship—I will grant it to you when you are worthy of it—and on this I pray God to take you into his holy keeping."

What minister, what historian, what liberal or learned man would ever have reported such a letter as one of Louis XIV's? Is this the tone of his politeness and his prudence? Is it thus that he expresses himself after having concluded a treaty? Is it thus that he speaks to a prince of an Imperial house who hath gained divers battles? Does he speak to him of holy keeping?—This letter is not assuredly either in the archives of the house of Orange, or in those of France; it is in those of this impostor alone.

With the same confidence does he pretend that Louis XIV. during the siege of Lisle, said to Madame de Maintenon, "Your prayers are granted, Madam, Vendôme holds back my enemies; you will be queen of France." If a prince of the blood had heard these words, we should scarcely have believed them to have been uttered. And it is a blackguard, named la Beaumelle, that quotes them without the smallest warrant? could the king suppose that the duke of Vandôme held his enemies, while they were victorious, and were besieging Lisle? what relation could there be between the raising of the siege of Lisle, and the coronation of Madame de Maintenon?

Who told him that the dutchess of Burgogne had the credit to prevent the king from declaring Madame de Maintenon queen? In what library of blue paper did he find that the Imperialists and the English threw billets from their camp into Lisle, and that these billets said "Assure yourselves, Frenchmen, Madame de Maintenon will not be your queen, we will not raise the siege." How did the besiegers throw the billets into the city? how did the besieged inhabitants know that Louis XIV. intended to make Madame de Maintenon queen, when the siege was raised? how can he heap upon one another so many inconsistencies, with a tone of confidence, that the most important man of the kingdom would not dare to assume, if engaged in memoirs full of truth and reason?

The history of the pretended marriage of the dauphin with Mademoiselle Choin, is worthy the other infipidities, and has no foundation, but the reports of the populace.

We shrug up our shoulders, when we see such a man offering us, continually, his ideas, as the conversations of Louis XIV. of Madame de Maintenon, of the king of Spain, of the princess des Ursins, of the duke of Orleans, &c. Madame de Maintenon assures us, according to him, that the prince of Condé would never command the armies, "because the king had always been determined, not to confide the army to a prince of the blood."

And

And yet the great Condé, and the duke of Orleans did command them.

It is with the same judgment, and the same truth, that during the siege of Toulon, he makes Charles XII. say, while employed in pursuing the Czar at five hundred leagues distance, "If Toulon is taken, I will go back, and retake it."

Of all the princes whom he attacks with a presumption which would be very punishable, if it were not contemptible, the duke of Orleans, regent of the kingdom, is the one whom he dares to calumniate with the most cynical, and the most absurd violence. He begins by saying, that in 1713, the duke of Orleans opposed the marriage of the duke of Bourbon, and the princess de Condé, and that the king said to him, *tête-à-tête* in his cabinet, "I am surprized that after having "pardoned you one thing, which struck at your life, "you have yet the insolence to cabal in my own house "against me." La Beaumelle was certainly concealed in the cabinet, when the king made use of these words. The word "insolence" is particularly correspondent to the manners of Louis XIV. and happily applied to the presumptive heir of the crown. All that he says of this prince, is equally well founded.

It must be owned, that he is very deep read, and well skilled in history, when he says that the duke of Orleans was recognized regent by parliament, in opposition to the president de Lubert, the president de Maisons, and many members of the assembly, &c. The president de Lubert was a president of inquests, who meddled with nothing. M. de Maisons was never a first president; he was particularly attached to the regent, and was about to be keeper of the seals, when he died suddenly. And there was not a member of parliament, nor a peer who did not give his voice with an unanimous concurrence. In proportion to the number of words, is the number of gross errors in this narrative of la Beaumelle, on which he found it so easy a matter to inform himself, that he applied no further than the hawkers and house porters.

I will not speak of the odious and contemptible calumnies which this la Beaumelle has spewed forth against the house of Orleans, in more than one work. He has been punished, and we must not revive those buried horrors from their eternal oblivion.

But how could he be so ignorant of the customs of the world, and at the same time be rash enough to say, "that the duchess de Berry acknowledged that she had married the count de Riom, and that on the instant M. de Mouchy demanded the office of chief master of the wardrobe, of this gentleman?" M. de Riom to have a chief master of the wardrobe! what pity! the first prince of the blood has not one. The office is only known in the king's household. In fine, the whole of this work is a mere tissue of ridiculous impositions, in which there is not the slightest probability. It is the production of a little huguenot, elevated to be a preacher, who had seen nothing, but who has spoken as if he had seen every thing; who has written in a stile as audacious, as it is impertinent, to gain a little bread, which he did not deserve; and who would have been worthy of the cord alone, if he had not been qualified for bedlam.

It happened that some provincials, who had not any knowledge of public affairs, were deceived for some time by the falsehoods which this miserable calumniator, sold with so much assurance. But this book has been regarded at Paris, with as much horror as disdain. It is placed in the rank of these mercenary productions, whose purpose is to be satyrical, that they may sell, well knowing that they cannot be rational. Consequently, they are forgot for ever.

R E F U T A T I O N
OF AN
ANONYMOUS PUBLICATION

AGAINST THE MEMORY OF THE DECEASED

MR. JOSEPH SAURIN,

OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, EXAMINER OF BOOKS,
AND OVERSEER OF THE JOURNAL OF THE MEN OF
LETTERS, WHICH ANONYMOUS PIECE WAS IN-
SERTED IN A SWISS JOURNAL, IN 1758.

IF he who pursues the deceased Mr. Saurin, even in the grave, knew that this academician has left a numerous family, it would, no doubt, afflict him to think, that he had carried the poignard to the bosoms of his children, by stirring up the ashes of the father.

If he knew that the son, as full of honour and merit, as he is destitute of fortune, can see himself torn from all his hopes, by the calumnies with which he has blackened the memory of his father; if he knew that these calumnies may deprive five virtuous daughters of an establishment, he would certainly blot out with his tears, that which his criminal imprudence hath driven him to write. To what are we reduced, when we find not only the men of letters, who ought to be humane, but those, even, whose profession is charity, infect the journals and dictionaries with slanders, personal abuse, and calumnies, which religion reproves, and the world abhors!

They printed some years ago, in the supplements of Moreri and the celebrated Bayle, some anecdotes concerning the deceased Mr. Joseph Saurin. They accuse him

him, in these articles, of the most odious actions, because he quitted one sect for another, or rather, because he loved better to live at Paris in the bosom of letters, than to consume himself with the paltry stuff of theological disputes. I was irritated at the insolence of the compiler, named *Chaufepie*, who fancied himself capable of continuing the dictionary of Bayle.

Dictionaries are meant as repositories of the sciences, and not the registers of a criminal chamber. Yet this scandalous publication produced some effect on such minds as were weak, and eager for the shame of another.

I passed three years of my youth with Mr. Joseph Saurin, in the study of geometry and metaphysics; I knew him not in the time of the misfortunes and the weaknesses, which they impute to him, (weaknesses of which, I know him to be very incapable) but I was intimately acquainted with him, in the time of his tranquillity, that is to say, when he lived unknown, retired, studious, frugal, and austere. I saw him die with a manly resignation, adoring God, repenting of his own faults, and pardoning those of others, despising all the false systems which vain or artful men have added to the word of God, penetrated with a pure religion, of which every good mind feels the force, and cherishes the consolations.

It is of such men that I give an account in the list of writers of the age of Louis XIV. I have studied the history of that great age, (the model of the present) for the purpose of doing justice to all the men of genius and learning, and to all the artists that adorned it. I have wished, in praising the dead, to excite the living to imitation. I have celebrated the labours of the Fénélons, the Bossuets, the Paschals, the Bourdaloues, the Massillons, with the same candour that I have painted Louis XIV, uniting the two seas, founding the marine and commerce, establishing military discipline and police, preventing by his favours, the silent claims of the great men of genius and learning through all Europe; deserving, in spite of his defects and his faults,
the

the title of "the prodigious man," which the minister of state, Don Ustaris, gave to him in his excellent book on the administration of the kingdom of Spain.

The honest men of all nations, have subscribed to these truths, except, perhaps, some inveterate enemies, who in their hearts, love what they outwardly condemn. It has been the same with all the great men of the age, of Louis XIV. Public equity hath done them justice, and the spirit of party has murmured at the sentence.

Joseph Saurin has experienced the same treatment, a man of the most exalted genius of that age of great men. The most learned men then enlightened the world, and now we are employed in dissecting their bodies.

If this philosopher had fallen into weighty faults, it would have behoved us to cover them with the mantle of charity, it is to the interest of society, it is to the interest of religion to do so. What can a man, invested with the gown of a minister, gain, by speaking of piety, when at the same time, he exasperates himself in proving that his fellow servant hath merited punishment.

He speaks of prudence! is there any prudence in dishonouring the profession? he speaks of religion! is there any religion in stirring up the ashes of a man, who has been buried more than thirty years, in order to prove that he died a criminal? what religion is there in conceiving rage and hatred against the living and the dead? what good can flow to society, to morality, or to public edification, from slander's rising up, and opposing all the respectable testimonies which have been published in favour of a virtuous family?

Very much hurt at the imposture practised against this family, and urged by the rights of humanity, I went in search of a gentleman, an ancient officer, and lord of the parish, in which Joseph Saurin had been what they call minister or pastor. "Have you ever seen a letter," said I to him, "in which Saurin is supposed to accuse himself of the faults, which they lay to his charge, and which they have published?" no, replies the officer, full of openness and humanity, "I have never

“ ver seen it, and I cannot approve of the treatment he
 “ has met with.” All his family answered in the same
 manner. Three respectable preachers, impressed by the
 same principles of honour, signed the same declaration,
 and yet behold a man, who dares not sign his name,
 rises up against, and contradicts all these testimonies.
 “ I wish not,” says he, “ that you should calm the af-
 “ flicted breasts of his family, vain are your authentic
 “ proofs. I wish, by a libel, without a name, piously to
 “ tear the hearts of those, whom you have consoled!”

Have we not a right to say, to this fanatical liar, “ By
 what unheard of cruelty are you instigated to come with-
 out mission, without title, and without reason, to per-
 secute the memory of a wise man, whom you never
 knew, and from the depth of your little, and yet barbar-
 ous country, to pursue the children whom you never
 saw? produce the evidence on which you proceed, or
 give an honourable satisfaction. An accuser ought to
 have proofs in his hand, and when he has them, he is
 odious. If he has them not, he is a calumniator, and
 deserves to be punished by justice, when it can reach
 him.

By what incomprehensible excess can you proceed so
 far, as to tax with deism and atheism, the charitable ser-
 vice rendered to the memory of a man deceased, and to
 the reputation of a son, who has already given room for
 the fairest expectations of his being much superior to
 his father in letters?

Miserable village cur! do you call him a deist and
 an atheist, who defends innocence? what then are you
 who outrage it?”

We know that this sink of iniquity, is nothing but
 the overflowings of that puddle in which the poet John
 Baptist Rousseau was plunged, after the adventure of
 his couplets, for which he was condemned to perpetual
 banishment, by the chatelet, and the parliament of Pa-
 ris. He was foolish enough to confess, that he was the
 author of the first six couplets, and criminal enough to
 dare to accuse an old geometrician, of having made the
 others. Convicted of calumny, and of subornation of

wit-

witnesses he was justly condemned. Having taken refuge in Switzerland, among the domestics of the count de Luc, ambassador of France, he there brewed all these impositions against Joseph Saurin.

It signifies nothing to me, whether Rousseau is, or is not in the number of the artists of words, who have done honour to France;—whether he has made some passable, or some very disgusting comedies;—some harmonious, or some detestable odes;—or whether he has written epigrams, good or bad, on Sodomy and Beastiality: it imports me not, that an interested partisan in these epigrams, calls him the great Rousseau, to distinguish him from all other Rousseaus; I only wish in this short piece, to illustrate the truth, in points, of which I am fully informed. There are two monsters which desolate the earth, in the profoundest peace: the one is Calumny, and the other Intolerance. I will combat these to the day of my death.

TRAN-

TRANSLATION
OF THE
POEM OF JOHN PLOKOF,
COUNSELLOR OF HOLSTEIN,
ON THE PRESENT AFFAIRS.*

I.

TO arms! princes and republics! Christians! who have been, for so long a time, incensed the one against the other, for interests as insignificant, as they are badly understood; to arms against the enemies of Europe! the usurpers of the throne of the Constantines call you even, themselves, to their ruin. They call aloud to you, while they are falling beneath the victorious sword of the Russians, "Come, assist to exterminate us!"

II.

The Sardanapalus of Stamboul lulled asleep in sloth, effeminacy, and barbarism, was awakened in a moment, by the voices of his insolent satraps and his ignorant priests. They said to him, "Violate, O! Mustapha, the rights of nations; far from respecting the ambassadors of monarchs, begin by ordering us to put them to the sword, and afterwards permit us to publish to the earth, in thy name, that thou goest to

* Written during the war between the Russians and Turks.

"punish

“punish Russia because she hath disobeyed thee.” “I will it,”—hath the drowsy lord of the Dardanelles and of Marmara, replied—His Janissaries and his Spahis have departed, and he has sunk profoundly into sleep again.

III.

While his material soul hath delivered itself over to dreams of flattery, on the breasts of two black-eyed Georgians, who were torn by his eunuchs from the arms of their mothers, to satisfy his desires without love, and his brutality without discernment; the genius of Russia hath displayed her brilliant wings; she has made her voice heard from Neva to the Pont-Euxine, in Sarmatia, in Dacia, on the borders of the Danube, in the promontary of Tenarus, in the plains and in the mountains where Menelaus reigned of old. This puissant genius hath spoken, and the barbarous inhabitants of Turkestan have been levelled with the earth. Stamboul trembles. The axe is laid to the root of this huge tree that covers Europe, Asia, and Africa, with its fatal branches. And yet you rest in tranquillity! you, ye princes! who have been so often outraged by this savage nation—you sleep like Mustapha, the son of Mah-mouth!

IV.

We will not again, perhaps, find so fair an occasion, to drive back and confine within their ancient limits the ravagers of the earth. Servia opens her arms to the young emperor of the Romans, and calls to him—“Deliver me from the Ottoman yoke.”

May this young prince who loves virtue and true glory, place his fame in revenging the cause of his august ancestors! May he have constantly, before his eyes, Vienna besieged by a Vizir, and Hungary ravaged for two entire centuries.

V. May

V.

May the lion of St. Mark, be enraged at seeing himself placed, without complaisance, at the head of an evangelist! may he run upon his prey! may those who yearly wed in tranquillity the ocean, defend the waves by the prows of a hundred ships! may they retake the sacred isle of Venus, and that where Minos published his laws—laws which are now forgotten for those of the Alcoran!

VI.

The country of Themistocles and Miltiades shake their chains, on seeing, from afar, the towering eagle of Catharine, but yet the eagle cannot break them from their hands. Wherefore! is there in Europe no more than one ignorant people, a handful of Monténégrins, a swarm of ants, who dare to follow the path that this triumphant eagle hath described to us, in his impetuous flight?

VII.

The brave chevaliers of the rock of Malt burn with impatience to repossess themselves of the isle of the sun, and of roses, which was taken from them by Soliman, the intrepid uncle of the feeble Mustapha. The noble and heroic Spaniards, who have never made peace with these barbarians, who have not sent to them consuls of merchants under the name of ambassadors, to receive repeated and concealed affronts; the Spaniards who brave in Oran the powers of Africa, will they suffer the seven pitiful towers of Bisance to insult the towers of Castille?

VIII.

In the times of gross ignorance, of weak superstition, and of ridiculous chivalry, the pontiffs of Europe found the secret of arming the Christians against the mussulmen, by giving them, in recompence for their labours, a cross upon their shoulders, and their benedictions.

The

The eternal arbitrator of the universe, said they, has ordained that chevaliers and their equerries, to please their wives, should go to destroy all who inhabited the stony and sterile territories of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, as if it was of importance to God, and women, that this miserable country should not belong to the Franks, the Greeks, the Arabs, the Turks, or the Corasmins.

IX.

The secret, and true aim of these great armaments was, to subject the Greek church to the Latin; for it is impious to pray to God in Greek, he understands no language but the Latin. Rome wished to have the disposal of the bishopricks of Laodicea, of Nicomedia, and of Grand Cairo. She wished to make the gold of Asia glide along the waves of Tiber. Avarice and Rapine disguised in the habit of Religion have destroyed millions of men, and have impoverished those even who fancied they would enrich themselves, by the fanaticism which they inspired.

X.

Princes! we are not now employed on crusades. Let us leave the ruins of Jerusalem, of Separvaim, and Corozaim, of Sodom and Gomorrah; let us pursue Mustapha and share the booty. His troops have been beaten, but they are disciplined by defeats. A Vizir teaches his Janissaries the Prussian exercise. The Turks, recovered from their astonishment, can yet render themselves formidable. Those who have been conquered in Dacia, may one day besiege Vienna a second time. The moment for destroying the Turks is arrived. If you do not seize the time; if you permit a nation so terrible, to become disciplined, another time she may perhaps destroy you. But where are those who know both to foresee, and to prevent!

XI.

Politicians say, "We wish to see on what side the balance inclines; we wish to be the equilibrium; money the principal movement in all engines, we want; we have lavished it in the useless wars, which have exhausted many nations, and have produced no real advantages to one." You have not money! poor princes! The Turks had less than you when they took Constantinople—Come, sieze the sword, and march.

XII.

Thus spoke, in the Cimbrian Kersoneses, a citizen who loved great exploits. He detested the Turks as the enemies of all arts. He deplored the destiny of Greece. He sighed over the fate of Poland, whose bowels were torn asunder by their hands, instead of reuniting herself beneath the wisest and the most enlightened of kings. He sung in German verse, but the Greeks understood him not, and the confederate Polonese would not hearken to his voice.

THE
SENTIMENTS
OF AN
ACADEMICIAN OF LYON,
ON SOME PASSAGES OF THE
COMMENTARIES ON CORNEILLE.

I Have adopted in my youth, some ideas of M. de Voltaire, on poesy, and on the manner of forming our judgment on it. The criticisms of M. Clement, have inspired me with some reflections, that I mean to lay before the men of letters, more learned than myself, who may judge between us.

M. de Voltaire in commenting on Corneille, hath asserted that we must introduce into the colloquy no metaphors, that do not form an image to the eye, either noble or agreeable. He condemns these two verses of Heraclius.

Et n'eût été Léonce en la dernière guerre,
Ce dessein avec lui serait tombé par terre.

He blames on this principle, these other verses of Heraclius:

Le peuple impatient de se laisser séduire
Au premier imposteur armé pour me détruire
Qui s'osant revêtir de ce fantôme aimé,
Voudra servir d'idole à son zèle charmé.

To discover, says he, how far this is badly expressed, let us throw the verse into prose.

“ Le peuple est impatient de se laisser séduire au
 “ premier imposteur armé pour me détruire; qui s’osant
 “ revêtir de ce fantôme aimé, voudra servir d’idole à
 “ son zèle charmé.”

“ The people are anxious to permit themselves to be
 seduced by the first impostor, who is armed against me;
 and who daring to cloath himself with this beloved
 phantom, would serve as the idol to their infatuated
 zeal!”

Do we not revolt against this impropriety? is it possible for a man to cloath himself with a phantom? is the image just? how can we put a phantom on the body? &c.”

M. Clement treats this sentiment of M. de Voltaire with excessive ridicule. He attacks it in a plausible manner, in these words.

“ The metaphor is principally dedicated to intellectual
 “ things, which we wish to render sensible, by striking
 “ images. Thus when I say,—my soul opens itself to joy,
 “ my heart expands itself,—they borrow the image of
 “ a flower which opens and expands itself, to the rays
 “ of the sun. But although we can paint this flower,
 “ we cannot assuredly paint with the same materials, a
 “ soul, &c.”

I think it necessary to reply to M. Clement, that it is not of such metaphors, that M. de Voltaire speaks: these are derived from vulgar expressions, received in common conversation. The first which says, “ my heart
 “ opens itself to joy; sadness depresses, hope reanimates me,” expresses these sentiments by images, strong and true. He has perceived his heart, which was before, as it were contracted and dried up, dilate itself on receiving consolation: and it was for this reason, that some of the painters, in the grosser times, have wished to figure in some of the altar pieces, by painting a heart surrounded with rays, a heart enlightened by grace. Sadness indeed does not throw a soul upon the ground, but a painter may very forcibly figure a man beaten and overthrown by grief; while he paints another who raises himself with serenity, while hope lends him her hand.

A firm soul, a heart severe, tender, lurking, and volatile; a genius bright, refined, low, light, were at first used as metaphors: they are so no more; they are now the ordinary language. M. de Voltaire speaks of those as which the poet invents. I believe with him that they must always be just and picturesque,—“A design which falls to the ground,” has not, as I think, either justice or grace, and it is impossible to draw an idea from it. M. Clement pretends that an author may say in a tragedy, “a design hath fallen to the ground,” because we say in conversation, “this design hath run aground.” I believe that he deceives himself. I think that the first person who said “my designs have run aground,” formed in his mind a metaphor bold, noble, affecting, and picturesque. The idea was taken from a ship, and the designs are put in the place of man. It is now the custom to say that a design hath run aground: it is therefore no more a metaphor; it is a common, proper expression. It is not the same with respect to the expression of falling to the ground. This is an invention of the poet, and has nothing neither noble or picturesque in it; and the verse therefore does not appear to me to have more elegance than this.

“N'eût été Léonce en la dernière guerre.”

It appears to me also that no person would approve of an impostor, “who daring to cloath him with a beloved phantom, became the idol of infatuated zeal.” If any one at this time were to give such a verse, I do not think he would find one man who would dare to take up his defence.

He has blamed, in Andromaché, this verse of Orestes, who compares the fire of his love to that which consumed Troy.

Brûlé de plus de feux que je n'en allumai.

He condemns also this verse of Arons in Brutus, where Arons says, speaking of the ramparts of Rome,

Du sang qui les inonde ils semblent ébranlés.

In truth these figures are too far fetched, and too distant from nature. The beloved phantom with which the person cloaths himself, to serve as the idol to infatuated zeal, is yet more defective. It is what the father Bohours calls the nerveze, in his art of sound thinking.

It frequently happens that verse irregular, obscure, badly constructed, deformed with unnatural figures, and even filled with solecisms, has some delusion on the theatre. The rule which M. de Voltaire gives for discerning this verse, appears to me to be very sure. Despoil the verse of the rhyme and the harmony, render it into prose, and the fault will then discover itself naked, as the deformity of a body, when stripped of its finery.

I remember to have heard recited this verse in a very extraordinary tragedy.

*Du sang de Nonnius avec soin recueilli,
Autour d'un vase affreux dont il était rempli,
Au fond de ton palais, j'ai rassemblé leur troupe
Tous se sont abreuvés de cette horrible coupe.*

Throw this verse into prose, and see if you can make any intelligible meaning out of it. Compare it afterwards to the verse of Æschylus on a similar subject, translated by Boileau in his treatise on the sublime.

*Sur un bouclier noir sept chefs impitoyables,
Épouvantant les Dieux de fermens effroyables
Près d'un taureau mourant qu'ils viennent d'égorger
Tous, la main dans le sang, jurent de se venger.*

This is almost the same idea with the preceding, but what difference! you find here not only great images
and

and the sweetest harmony, but also all the precision of the chastest prose.

The judicious Boileau had therefore very great reason to say,

No pompous barbarisms can my taste admit,
Nor can proud solecisms stand for wit;
When language fails, the poet, though divine,
But lamely rounds the period, and the line.

I think that there is not any good verse, however difficult in its construction, but what will stand the test of M. de Voltaire's proposition, and come off triumphant from its rigorous trial, "Je l'amais inconstant, qu'aurais je fait fidele *," is perhaps the most hazardous construction that ever was made. It is verse if you count the eleven syllables; it is prose if detached from the following verse. But in both cases "qu'aurais je fait fidele," is a thousand times more energetic than if it had been, "qu'aurais je fait, si tu avais été fidele." This turn is new, and from its novelty pleases, but we must not repeat it. There are expressions which Boileau calls discoveries, which have a wonderful effect in the place where a man of genius employs them, but they become ridiculous in imitation.

Mr. Clement believes that M. de Voltaire meant, that we must turn verse into prose, substituting other expressions, that we may rightly judge of it. It is precisely the contrary: we must leave the construction entirely as it is, with all the words, and rob it only of the rhyme.

M. de la Motte seems to pretend that the inimitable Racine was no poet, and to prove this, he threw the rhyme out of the first scene of Mithridates, preserving

* I loved you, inconstant; would I had done so, faithful!

scrupulously, all the rest, as was necessary to his design. M. de Voltaire, if I am not deceived, demonstrated to him, that it was this circumstance by which we might discover Racine to be as great a poet, as it was possible to be, in our language. Wherefore! because it was not possible to find, in all this scene of Mithridates, freed from the slavery of rhyme, one word even which was not necessary in its place, one vicious construction, one highflown or low expression, one that was false, far-fetched, repeated, obscure, or hazardous. All the men of letters agreed that this was the true touchstone. They saw that Racine had surmounted, without effort, all the difficulties of rhyme. That he was a man, who loaded with irons, yet walked gracefully and with ease; and that this was certainly more than they could say of any other tragic writer, after the beautiful scenes of Cornelia, Paulina, the Horatii, Cinna, and the Cid. Let us open Rhodogune, the last scene of which is a chef d'œuvre, and read the commencement of this famous piece, only stript of the rhyme.

“ Ce jour *pompeux*, ce jour *heureux* nous luit enfin
 “ qui doit dissiper la *nuît d'un trouble si long*, ce grand
 “ jour où l'Hyménée étouffant la vengeance, remet l'in-
 “ telligence entre le Parthe et nous, affranchit la prin-
 “ cesse, et nous fait pour jamais un lien de la paix du
 “ motif de la guerre. Mon frere ce grand jour est ve-
 “ nu où notre reine cessant de tenir plus la *couronne in-*
 “ *certaine* doit rompre son silence obstiné aux yeux de
 “ tous, déclarer l'aîné de deux princes *jumeaux* et
 “ l'avantage seul d'un *moment de naissance*, dont elle a
 “ caché la connoissance jusqu' ici, mettant le sceptre
 “ dans la main *au* plus heureux, va faire l'un sujet,
 “ et l'autre roi. Mais n'admirez-vous point que cette
 “ même reine *le* donne pour époux a l'objet de sa haine,
 “ et n'en doit faire un roi qu'afin de couronner celle
 “ quelle aimait à gêner dans les fers? *Rhodogune* traitée
 “ par elle en esclave *va être montée par elle*, sur le
 “ trône,” &c.

In perusing this beginning of *Rhodogune*, which is the same, word for word, as the piece, I discover all that escapes me in the representation—"a pompous day, a happy day, a great day," repeated in four lines; "a night of trouble, an enfranchised princess," without having any knowledge of the princess before: "a motive of war, which becomes a bond of peace," without being able to divine what this motive is, what the war is, who makes it, on whom it is made, or who the personage is who speaks. I see a queen who ceases to hold, any longer, the uncertain crown, and who goes to place the sceptre in a happier hand: but I am not given to understand even the name of this queen. I only know that *Rhodogune* goes to be mounted on the throne by this unknown queen.

All these irregularities manifest themselves to me, much more easily in the prose, than when they are disguised by rhyme, and declamation. I am confirmed therefore in the principle of *Voltaire*, which establishes that for the proper understanding whether poetry is correct, we must throw it into prose. *M. Clement* says that this system is that of a fool—I do not believe that I shall be a fool in adopting it; I hope only that *Clement* will one day grow more wise, and polite.

The limits of this short essay will not permit me to say but a few words on the many atrocious injuries which *M. Clement* heaps on *M. de la Harpe*, in his dissertation, which ought to be purely grammatical. He accuses him of having written a part of the commentaries on the works of *Corneille*, from motives of interest, and he ventures this calumny, as a finishing stroke to the many which he had showered on his head, and which could not fail to return on himself, who had lavished them so unjustly. I have never seen *M. de Voltaire*; but I am so well informed of his conduct towards the family of *Peter Corneille*, and of the opinion of all the men of letters, as to be able to know how much they reprove the odious invectives of *M. Clement*, which are as ill adapted as his criticisms. I have seen very little of *M. de la Harpe*;
I only

I only know him by the excellent works which have been so highly valued by the academy, and by the pieces of poësy which are replete with taste. All who have read this libel of M. Clement, unanimously condemn the vulgar rage with which he draws in the name of M. de la Harpe, in order to insult him without cause. We are surprized that he should continue as he began, and that after having made a volume of calumnies, already forgotten, against M. de St. Lambert, and so many other respectable men of letters, he should wish to persuade the world that messieurs de Voltaire, and de la Harpe, have laboured, in concert, to decry the great Corneille, although at the same time the author of *Zara*, *Albina*, *Merope*, *Brutus*, *Semiramis*, *Mahomet*, the *Orphan of China*, and of *Tancred*, is on his knees before the father of the stage; before the great author of the *Cid*, the *Horatii*, *Cinna*, *Polyeuctes*, and of *Pompey*; although he does not advert to his faults without admiring the beauties with enthusiasm; although he scarcely criticises *Partharites*, *Theodore*, *Don Sancho*, *Attila*, *Pulcheria*, *Agésilas*, and *Surena*; and in fine, although he did not undertake the commentary on this author, so great and so unequal, but for the generous purpose of augmenting the dowery of his virtuous descendant.

It appears to me that the worthy commentator on Corneille kept truth, and the instruction of men of letters, always in his view. I am pleased to see how, imitating the conduct of the Academy, when they judged of the *Cid*, he mingles at all times, merited praise with just stricture. I am pleased to see him, at times, fearful to decide. See how he expresses himself on a difficulty which he proposes in the criticism on the third act of *Cinna*. "This is a question, on which the readers who are acquainted with the human heart ought to pronounce—I am far from possessing judgment equal to the task." I am pleased above all to see, with what respect, with what sentiments of a heart truly impressed, he ranks *Cinna* above the *Electra* and the *Œdipus* of Sophocles, those two master-pieces of the Greek stage, and this too at a time

time when he is exposing very great defects in Cinna. M. de Voltaire appears to me a man enamoured of the art, who perceives its beauties with idolatry, and who is sensibly shocked with its faults. A bookseller assures me that he treats himself in the same manner, and that he is touched with an excess of grief, to see that they have printed his social and private pieces, which he deems unworthy of publication.

What relation or similarity is there between Mr. Clement, the author of Cinna, and the author of Mahomet? By what right does he interfere with them? Wherefore does he tear to pieces all his cotemporaries? Must he, like a cur at the door, bark at every man who enters the house? Why does he not rather give us examples? Why does he not give us his tragedy of Medea? we will applaud it if it is good. The beauties which he will introduce into it will enrich our literature; but so long as he teazes the public with fatires in prose, and personal injuries, we can only lament that such a man exists.

A LET-

A
L E T T E R

O N T H E
P R E T E N D E D C O M E T.

Grenoble, 17th May, 1773.

SOME Parisians, who are not philosophers, and who, if we may judge from what they say, will never become so, have given us notice that the end of the world is approaching, and that it will infallibly happen on the 20th day of the present month of May.

They expect, on that day, a comet, which ought to strike this little globe in its course, and reduce it to impalpable powder, agreeable to a certain prediction of the academy of sciences—which never was made.

Nothing is more probable than this event: for James Bernoulli, in his Treatise on Comets, foretold expressly that the famous comet of 1680 would return with a terrible fracas on the 17th of May, 1719. He assured us that in truth the head of the comet would do no mischief, but that the tail would be an infallible sign of the wrath of Heaven. If James Bernoulli deceived himself: his error, perhaps, was no more than that of fifty-four years and three days.

But an error so very inconsiderable being considered as nothing, in the immensity of ages, by all the geometers; it is clear that nothing is more reasonable than to expect the annihilation of the world on the 20th day of the present month of May, 1773, or in some other year. If the matter should not happen then, that which is deferred is not forgiven.

The

There certainly was no reason for laughing at Mr. Trissotin, Trissotin though he is, when he came to say to Madame Philaminte:

This night is ours, then let us fly,
 Another world is in the sky;
 Passing to this world nigh,
 Should we encounter as we pass,
 T'will break, and crumble us, like glass.

A comet may, with all its force, encounter this globe, in the parabole which it describes, but when will it arrive? or will this comet be of an equal diameter to us, or greater, or less? If equal, we shall do as much mischief to her as we shall receive, the re-action will be equal to the action: if greater she will prejudice us; if smaller we shall hurt her.

This great event may happen in a thousand manners, and no one can affirm that the earth and the other planets, have not already undergone more than one revolution, by the embarrassment of a reneontre with a comet.

The great Newton has given us greater alarms than M. Trissotin; for he pretends that the comet of 1680, having approached the sun to within the distance of the demi diameter of that star, ought to acquire a heat two thousand times stronger than red-hot iron. M. le Monnier says, three thousand times stronger. But supposing this comet had been of iron, why would it have acquired, at the distance of a hundred and fifty thousand leagues from the sun, a heat two or three thousand times stronger than iron can acquire in our forges? Solids as well as fluids have each their last degree of heat, which cannot be augmented. Boiling water cannot be made more hot, nor can oil, nor metals. Iron and brass, which melt in our forges, to a fluid of fire, cannot be heated more than their natures will bear. The fire of a forge is the same as that of the sun. This star being greater will heat bodies
 more

more quickly; but it cannot give them a more intense heat than they are able to suffer.

Newton in his calculation hath supposed that the heat of iron can be augmented, and he hath calculated on this hypothesis. But how can a body, whatever it be, passing rapidly at the distance of a hundred and fifty thousand leagues from the sun, be heated two thousand times more than iron, which is penetrated with fire, in an ardent furnace, and which is arrived at its last degree of heat. It appears that Newton ought to have reserved this adventure of inflammation for his Commentary on the Apocalypse.

But in regard to comets themselves, it is an opinion very reasonable, but it has never been demonstrated. It is so little demonstrated, that all those who have predicted their appearance, have been found to be dupes.

It is very fine, without doubt, to know enough to be able to deceive ourselves thus—but let us yet wait some millions of ages to have the demonstration.

We are come slowly to some knowledge of nature—posterity will slowly accomplish the rest.

It is pretended that the ancients knew as well as we that comets are planets that have a regular course round the sun, and they quote in proof of this, Pythagoras, Philolaus, Seneca, Plutarch, &c. &c.

Yes, they knew something of a science confused and uncertain, which yet was not a science; they knew the circulation of the comets, as Hippocrates knew the circulation of the blood, without having defined it, without having proved it, without having published it.

There was not any school which taught, methodically, the course of the earth, of the other planets, and of the comets round the sun in their orbits. It was a suspicion thrown out at random; a philosophical idea formed in some heads and not developed. It was almost thus that Bacon announced a gravitation, an universal attraction. The true inventors are those who prove.

M. le

M. le Monnier, in his "Astronomical Institutions" hath reason to quote Seneca, the philosopher, who says, "non existimo cometem subitaneum esse ignem, sed inter opera æterna naturæ." I do not believe that comets are sudden exhalations, but eternal works of nature.

We must praise and honour Seneca, for having divined, that the time would come when posterity would be astonished that his age was ignorant of things so simple: "Veniet tempus quo posteri tam aperta nos nescisse mirabuntur." But this, however, proves that in his time they knew nothing of them.

It was the fate of the Senecas to foretel what would come to pass by simple conjectures, in a manner very different from that of the other philosophers. Seneca, the tragedian, predicts thus, in the part of Thieftes, the discovery of a new world. But if we were from this to infer, that Seneca ought to share with Columbus, in the glory of the discovery, it would not only be unjust, but ridiculous.

We do not find in Plutarch any testimony more favourable to antiquity than in Seneca. "Some Pythagoreans," says he, "think that a comet is a star, which does not shew itself till after a certain time. Others assure us that a comet is no other than the effect of vision, as the appearances which we see in a mirror. Anaxagoras and Democritus, that it is a concourse of stars mingling their light together. Aristotle pretends that it is an exhalation of inflammatory matter."

But I demand if the exhalation, the appearances in a mirror, and the concourse of two lights, give a competent idea of the theory of comets?

The opinion of the people of Paris, that a comet which is to appear on the 20th or the 21st of 1773, will bring on the conclusion of the world, hath something in it more positive than the discourse of Plutarch. But the idea is not new. It is a long time since men

* The opinions of the philosophers, book XIII.

knew that as the world had a beginning it must also have an end. Jupiter, himself, says, in the first book of the *Metamorphoses*, that the earth would perish by fire.

Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur adfore tempus,

Quo mare, quo tellus, corruptaque regia cœli

Ardeat, et mundi moles operosa laboret.

But Jupiter does not say, that this shall be the effect of a comet. This idea of the end of the world hath prevailed from the time of Jupiter to our eighteenth century. Our monks have profited from it. We know that more than one act of donation to these poor men begins with these words, "The end of the world being at hand, and I, N—— not wishing to be ranked among the goats, do give for the relief of my soul, &c. &c." But the comets had not any part in those devotions.

The Jack Pudding who foretold, at London, in 1756, an earthquake and the destruction of the city, made no comet to go halves with him on the occasion; and yet the people, affrighted, left the city on the day pointed out by this wise man.

The Parisians will not desert their city on the 30th of May—they will sing songs, and perform the comet; and the end of the world, at the comic opera, &c. &c.

TO THE
 KING IN COUNCIL,
 IN FAVOUR OF
 HIS SUBJECTS,
 WHO
 PRAY FOR THE LIBERTY OF FRANCE,
 AGAINST
 THE BENEDICTINE MONKS, WHO ARE BECOME CANONS
 OF ST. CLAUDIUS, IN FRANCHE-COMTE.

THE canons of St. Claudius, near Mont-Jura, in Franche Comte, were originally Benedictine secular monks, and till 1742. They have no other right to reduce into slavery the king's subjects, inhabitants of Mont-Jura, towards St. Claudius, than the custom established by the monks, their predecessors, of ravishing natural liberty from man. In vain hath God given it to them; in vain the dukes of Bourgogne and the kings of France; in vain the charters, the edicts* of agree-

* Edicts of the Abbé Suger, regent of the kingdom, in 1131; of Louis X. in 1315; of Henry II. in 1553; Ordinances of the Louvre, vol. I. p. 183.

The king of Sardinia has enfranchised the slaves of the dutchy of Savoy, by an edict of the 20th of January, 1762. In the latter estates-general held at Paris 1515, the third estate supplicated the king, to put into execution the ancient laws against the servitude of the glebe. State of the Monarchy by the Abbé du Bos, Vol. III. p. 298.

We find in the arrets of the first president de Lamoignon the project of a rule for the abolition of all the mort-mains, real and personal.

ment, with the law of nature, have snatched these unfortunate men from slavery.

The race of St. Bennet persist in treating us like slaves, who had been taken in war, or who had been sold to them by pirates. We respect the chapter of St. Claudius, but we cannot respect the injustice of the religious to whom they have succeeded. We are forced to plead against gentlemen of merit, in reclaiming our rights against the iniquitous monks. The chapter of St. Claudius ought to pardon us for defending them.

If the priests, against whom we implore the justice of God, and the king, have the least title, we will groan, in silence, under the yoke which they impose upon us. We understood that our enlightened government had abolished the laws, established by rapine in the days of barbarity: we contented ourselves with fighting, along with France, for the day so long, and so ardently desired, when the council should reflect that we were born men; that the benedictine monks, men like ourselves, were instituted by St. Bennet, but to labour in the earth like us, and to raise, towards Heaven, hands accustomed to the toil of agriculture. The council will find, without us, that their vows paid, at the foot of the altar, were not to be princes; and that our fortunes, our services, and our lives belong to the king and not to them. Thus we do not plead against the slavery of mort-main—we plead against the fraud, which supposes itself the owner of it. We take notice of the titles of our oppressors, to shew that they have no lawful pretext to oppress us, and that they have transmitted, to the chapter of St. Claudius, a vicious pretension in all its points.

They have for a long time drowned and stifled our complaints; but the king, more merciful than they are cruel, permits us at length to speak our grievances.

Before the reign of the duke, Philip the good, the Abbé of St. Oya, named St. Claudius, had, even then, the audacity to invade all the royal prerogatives, without any other title than that of the insatiate lust of power which characterized those times. He domineered
over

over more than a hundred villages. He coined money. He presumed to bestow letters of nobility. He empowered the monks to pronounce judgment on the processes of his vassals.

May it not be permitted us to demand, before we enter on the matter, if there is any thing more destructive of all authority, human and divine, and if these pretended rights are not high treason?

Philip the good, by his letters patent, dated at Lisle, in Flanders, the 14th of May, 1436, contented himself with restraining the usurpation, by which the monks had coined money, issued safe-conducts, and judged in the dernier resort. He contented himself with abolishing these abuses, because these only were complained of—the mort-main was not then established.

As a recompence for the loss of the rights which they had arrogated, they revenged themselves on the inhabitants; and not having any longer the right of coining money for themselves, they assumed the right of seizing on all that they could find, belonging to the people.

The inquisition having penetrated even to this uncivilized country, the rapine became sacred. The herdsman, the labourer, the trader were put in terror of the flames, both in this world and the next, if they did not carry, to the feet of the monks, all the fruits of their toil.

MORT-MAIN ESTABLISHED

IN THE

PETITIONING VILLAGES.

BY little and little, the communities, who now appeal to the justice of the king, found themselves slaves in three modes, and that without title.

Slaves in their persons.

Slaves in their fortunes.

Slaves both in person, and fortune.

Our personal slavery consists in the incapacity of disposing of our effects, in favour of our children, if they have not always lived with us, in the same house, and at the same board. In that case all belongs to the monks. The estate of an inhabitant of Mont-Jura, placed in the hands of a notary of Paris, becomes, in Paris even, the prey of those, who originally had embraced the evangelical poverty of Mont-Jura. The son prays for alms, at the gate of the house which his father had built; and the monks, so far from giving him an alms, arrogate to themselves an exemption from discharging the creditors of the father, and of regarding, as null and void, the hypothetical debts that remain on the house, of which they have taken possession. The wife throws herself in vain at their feet, to obtain a part of her dowry. This dowry, these debts, this paternal estate, all belong, by divine right, to the monks. The creditors, the wife, the children, all are reduced to, and die in beggary.

Real

Real slavery is that which is attached to a habitation. Whoever comes to occupy a house, in the empire of these monks, and lives in it a year and a day, becomes their vassal for ever. It happened some time ago that a French trader, the father of a family, drawn by his affairs into this barbarous country, took a house there, to lodge in, for a year. He died afterwards in his own country; in another province of France; his wife, and children, were very much astonished to see the bailiffs come, and seize upon their furniture, by warrant, to sell them in the name of St. Claudius, and drive the whole family out of the house of the father.

Mixed slavery, being composed of both the former, is that which rapacity, of the most execrable kind, hath constantly invented, and which robbers even did not presume to think of.

Ye usurpers of St. Claudius! produce your titles—shew us the privilege, if the blessed Bennet and the blessed St. Claudius have given you a privilege to feed on the tears, and the blood of the widow and the orphan!

If you have not the letters patent of the saints, shew us at least those of the king. If you are in possession of title deeds, open your archives; let us confront your charters with those which we have drawn from your own archives. We will fight you with your own proper weapons; and the king shall find on what foundation you presume to tyrannise over the subjects whom he wishes to govern only as a father.

We do not address these just complaints to any but the monks. It is not the chapter who have invented this oppression—they found it established. We conjure them in the name of Jesus Christ, our common father, to relieve us. Jesus Christ hath not ordained that his apostles should reduce their brethren to slavery.

TITLE-DEEDS WHICH SHEW THE TYRAN-
NICAL USURPATION OF THE BENEDICTINE MONKS,
NOW CANONS OF ST. CLAUDIUS.

WE are two portions of a people that are divided into six communities *. One of these portions extends itself in the midst of mountains and precipices, from the source of the river d'Orbe, to the bailiwick of Pontarlier. You incroached and seized upon this frightful country, that had moreover been brought in, and cultivated by our assiduous labour. You sold it in 1266 to John de Chalons, named the ancient, one of the lords of Franche Comte, from whom the princes of Orange descend. But in the articles of sale, where you specify all the rights which you vend, there is no mention of mort-main, slavery, or servitude. You sold nothing but the territory. By what right did you possess that? we know not. And by what right have you again taken possession of this territory, which you sold by a solemn contract? we are ignorant of this also. But we know very well that you have ravished from us that which we purchased from yourselves.

John de Chalons Arlay, the first of that name, son of John Chalons, the ancient, built a castle near to Roche, in Alpe, in the territory, sold by you, although it did not belong to you. All who were not lords of manors were at that time slaves—it was the jurisprudence of the Huns, the Vandals, the Herules, the Gepides, the Franks, the Bourguignons, and all the other famished barbarians, who sunk away and dissolved with the Gauls and the ancient Celts. These con-

* Lons-Chaumiére & Oreière; la Mouille & Morez; les Rouffes; le Bois d'amont; Morbier and Bellefontaine.

querors had never penetrated into this impracticable country, called St. Claudius, situated between three chains of mountains covered with eternal ice, and where the huts were buried, under thirty feet of snow, for seven months in the year. The barbarians, who came from the Boristhenes and Tanais, did not strive to reign over the few savages who inhabited these deserts, more frightful a hundred times than those of Siberia. The fertile plains had attracted their regard. But John de Chalons Arlay I. seeing this country peopled by means of excessive care and industry, with the most miserable of all men, wished to reduce even these miserable creatures to servitude, by virtue of the foedal right. For this John, of Chalons, like you, imagined that he possessed the same right as the Huns and Bourguignons, who had come to conquer the borders of the Saone and the Doux, and who had rendered the people slaves, by the famous right of being the strongest. The people, who had nothing to lose but their bodies, all fled on the first attempt of John de Chalons Arlay I.

John de Chalons Arlay II. the son, perceiving the barbarous folly of his father, who had thus deprived himself of useful vassals, called them back again in 1350, by a charter of the 13th of January. He gives up in this charter* all rights of mort-main, and servitude, and reserves to himself only the seigniories of tythage, and fines of alienation.

It is plain, therefore, that one half of the territory usurped by you, was evidently enfranchised from the servitude imposed by the Huns and Bourguignons wherever they came. They certainly did not transmit to you—to you the monks of St. Bennet, the sanguinary

* This charter and that of 1266 are related in the History of Pontarlier, by M. Droz, Counsellor to the Parliament of Besançon, pages 129 and 130. The canons of St. Claudius have, in their archives, the originals of these titles.

right, which they never exercised themselves, in this part of the world inaccessible to all conquerors, but monks. Let us come now to the other part.

You have usurped another desert, which extends itself to the frontiers of Switzerland. It is the country which is now called Lons-Chaumois, Orcière, la Mouille, Morez, les Rouffes. It is where his beneficent majesty, who reigns but for the good of the nation, hath proposed to open a road, through the frightful mountains, to communicate to Lyon, Bresse, Bugey, Val-Romey, and the country of Gex in Franche Comté, without passing by Switzerland. The inhabitants of these mountains, who are all laborious, and commercial, will see a new heaven with which this great project, worthy of the best of kings, is full. But shall they not find it otherways than as slaves, the slaves of monks? The more that the king shall open, to them, a door of knowledge of human nature, so much the more will the comparison of their own with the happier state of others of the king's subjects, render their state insupportable. They will say, "Hard by, the subjects of the king are free, and we wear the irons of St. Claudius." But by what title are they forced to wear those irons.

We conjure his Majesty, we conjure the council to attend to one circumstance that will astonish them. The monks invaded us without any title; and yet, behold the deed by which they have sold to us, all the territory which extends from Lons-Chaumois, as we have already said, to the frontiers of Switzerland.

This authentic deed, this act of sale is dated the 27th of February, 1390. William de la Baume, abbé of St. Claudius, sold us this land which we had ourselves cultivated; and the monks of St. Claudius assumed to themselves the right of treating, as slaves, the lawful possessors of these hills. They sold it to us at a time when we were ignorant of mort-main, of which there is not a word in the act, and they have endeavoured to
subject

subject us to this right, which destroys all the rights of men.

We presume to say, that they have no more reason to call us their vassals, than we should have to pretend that they were ours; perhaps even they have less; for, fire, our industrious hands are useful to the state—to what purposes do their hands serve? We lay at the feet of your Majesty the arrogance of this deed. We found it in the possession of a peasant, a descendant of those innocent savages, who had made the contract with William de la Baume. He knew not that he possessed the authentic instrument of his own and his fellow citizens liberty.

If our unpunished tyrants, the sons of St. Bennet, should presume to say to this peasant, “You knew as much of it as we; you have forged this deed;” we will answer them, we have found the duplicate in your own custody; in your very convent. Your secretary, irritated at your usurpation, seized with a remorse which you never feel, and fearing to appear, before God, as an accomplice in your guilt, detached his conscience from yours. He gave us this piece which demonstrates your subsequent usurpation. This usurpation has subsisted about two centuries, but it is a crime of two centuries. Fraud is not sacred for being antique.

You oppose to our claims the argument of prescription; but we oppose to you a much more respectable prescription, that of the rights of men, that of the right of nature. It is not our business to prove that we are born with the rights of men—It is your talk to prove that we have lost them. It is your business to display before the king, the titles by which we belong to the monks, more than to him. It is your part to prove, at what time you purchased us in Guinea to render us your slaves.

Yes, prescription can take place, but only in one instance: when it is presumed that mort-main has been established by the original lords of the territory; by the
the

the authority of the laws; by the letters-patent of the sovereign, in virtue of concessions, made by the proprietary lords, on condition of rendering the inhabitants subject to mort-main. But here it is altogether different; it is you who have sold us our own country; it is you who strive to subject after you have sold it. There is no presumption but against you—no probability but against you.

In fine, the great maxim of right condemns you, "*malæ fidei possessor nullo tempore præscribere potest.*" The possessor of a false right can in no time be prescribed. It is even the maxim of your canon right. Thus your cause is reproved both by God and man. The monks of St. Claudius cannot answer these arguments drawn from nature and the law. The canons, successors to the monks, have nothing to say to them.

You oppose to us also that you have the judicial authority, and the tythage in this country which we inhabit. You say that this judicial right and the tythes were resold by another la Baume (Peter) cardinal, archbishop of Besançon, bishop of Geneva, and abbé of St. Claudius, on the 24th of March 1518. This title serves to confound you: he sold you the tythes, and the judicial right, which we do not reclaim; but he did not sell you our liberties, which we do reclaim. There is not one word either of servitude, or mort-main in the deed of sale. What then are your titles? rapaciousness, avarice, usurpation, the fraud of monks, and our ignorance. You have treated us, as beasts, because there were among you some clerks that could read and write, while we confined ourselves to the cultivation of that earth which nourished you. Oppose no longer to the rights of human kind, the right of Attila, and the law of Ganbette.

May the descendant of St. Louis judge between us who are his subjects, and you who are our tyrants.

After having thus spoken to the monks, we supplicate the canons once more, to an action worthy of their nobility,

nobility, to join with us, and solicit his majesty to suppress a vexation, contrary to the laws of nature, to the rights of the king, to commerce, to the public weal, and above all to Christianity.

Signed,

LAMY CHAPUIS,

PAGET,

Special Procurators.

T H E
V O I C E O F T H E C U R A T E,
O N T H E
P R O C E S S O F T H E V A S S A L S
O F
M O N T - J U R A.

A R T I C L E F I R S T.

ON the day of St. Louis, 1772, I took possession of my cure. The greater part of my parishioners came to me in a body, and, in tears, demanded my assistance. I told them that my cure belonged to the monks, who gave me a pension of four hundred francs, which they call, I know not wherefore, a competent portion, and that I should willingly share it with my friends. Their syndic, who was their speaker, answered me thus :

“ We

“ We are ready ourselves to lay at your feet the
 “ little that remains to us, and to labour with our hands
 “ to supply your wants. We came only to solicit your
 “ support, to extricate us from the unjust slavery under
 “ which we groan in these deserts that we have culti-
 “ vated.”

“ How ! what would you say, my children ! what
 “ slavery ? Is it possible that there are any slaves in
 “ France ?”

“ Yes, Sir,” replies the syndic, “ we are the slaves
 “ of the same secular monks, who give you four
 “ hundred francs for serving your cure, and who gather
 “ in the fruits, both of your, and our labours. These
 “ monks, now become canons, have made themselves
 “ our sovereigns, and we are their slaves, named the
 “ subjects of mort-main. Assist us then in the name
 “ of that king, who makes war only for the purpose of
 “ delivering Christians from slavery, and whose feast we
 “ celebrate this day.”

I demanded of them the meaning of that strange ex-
 pression—the slaves of mort-main:—“ When at any
 “ time,” says he, “ our masters are not contented with
 “ the spoils, which they take possession, of in our cot-
 “ tages after our death, they cause the bodies to be dug
 “ up from the graves, and cut off the right hand, which
 “ is presented to them with great ceremony, as a penalty
 “ for the money, which they could not ravish from our
 “ indigence, and as a horrid example to deter our chil-
 “ dren from ever touching the effects of their parents,
 “ which belong to the monks our sovereigns.”

I sighed, and he continued.

“ We are slaves in our estates and persons. If we
 “ live in the house of our fathers and mothers, and
 “ keep with our wives a distinct table, all the estate
 “ belongs to the monks on the death of our parents.
 “ They drive us from the paternal dwelling. We ask
 “ for alms at the gate of the house in which we were
 “ born. They not only refuse this alms, but our mas-
 “ ters assume the right of not paying for the remedies
 “ furnished to our parents, nor for the funeral obse-
 “ quies

“ quies paid to their remains. Thus, in sickness, no
“ merchant dares to sell us a sheet upon credit; no
“ butcher will send us a morsel of meat: the apothecary
“ is afraid of giving us a medicine that might
“ prolong our lives. We die abandoned by all men;
“ and we are laid in the sepulchre, with the assurance
“ of having left our children in misery, and bondage.

“ If a stranger, ignorant of these customs, to his
“ misfortune, comes to live, for a year and a day, in this
“ barbarous country, he becomes the slave of the
“ monks as well as we. If he acquires afterwards a
“ fortune in another country, this fortune belongs also
“ to the same monks. They claim it from the furthest
“ most part of the universe, and this right they call the
“ right of pursuit.

“ If they can prove that a female, on her marriage,
“ did not lie in the house of her father, on the first
“ night of her wedding, but in that of her husband,
“ she loses the right of paternal succession. They issue
“ monitories against her, which frighten the whole
“ country, and which often force the intimidated peasants,
“ to swear, that she had absolutely committed the
“ crime of passing the first night of her marriage with
“ her husband. In which case the monks inherit.
“ Whether the inheritance amounts to twenty crowns,
“ or a hundred thousand francs, is of no consequence;
“ the whole belongs to them.

“ We are beasts of burthen. They load us while
“ we live; they sell our skins when we die, and they
“ throw our carcases to the dunghill.”

I exclaimed, “ all this is impossible, my dear parishioners;
“ do not laugh at my simplicity; we are in a
“ country of freedom; our kings, our first pontiffs,
“ have abolished slavery long ago. It is to calumniate
“ the religious to say that they have slaves in their
“ possessions. On the contrary, we have fathers of mercy
“ who collect alms, and who pass the seas to deliver
“ our brethren, who have been made slaves at Maroc,
“ at Tunis, or Algiers.”

“ Oh!”

“ Oh !” exclaims an old man of the troop, “ that they would also come, and deliver us !”

“ What !” continued I, “ monitories fulminated to discover, if a female slave did not lie in the bed of her husband, on the first night of her marriage ! no : this would be too great an outrage to religion, and to the laws of nature. Monitories are not thundered, but for the discovery of great public crimes, the authors of which are unknown. Go : I cannot believe you.”

As I concluded these words, a woman, named Jean Mary Mermet, fell at my feet weeping : “ Alas !” said she, “ these good men tell you nothing but the truth. The farmer of the canons of St. Claudius, who were before this Benedictines, has endeavoured to despoil me of the effects of my father, under the pretext of my having slept, in the house of my husband, on the first night of my marriage. The chapter obtained a monitory against me. I was reduced to beggary. I saw these infants who are now at my side perishing. The officers who drove us from our house, refused to give me the milk, which I had left in it, to nourish my youngest infant. We should have died, but for the succour afforded us, by the celebrated advocate Christine, the defender of the oppressed, and of M. de la Poule, his worthy associate, who took up my defence, and who found some errors, that rendered, invalid, the fatal monitory published with an intention to ravish from me all my estate, in the same manner, I was told, as the one published at Thoulouse against the Calas. The parliament of Besançon took pity on my misfortunes, and my innocence ; my persecutors were condemned to the expences by a solemn and unanimous arret, given on the 22d of June, 1772.”

She shewed me the arret of the parliament of Besançon, which she had in her hand. My surprize was redoubled. I learned from my own situation that it was possible to be, at the same instant, penetrated both by grief and joy. I own that I shed abundance of tears.

tears. I blessed the parliament, I blessed God. I embraced, weeping, my dear parishioners, who wept with me. I demanded, for what crime their ancestors had been condemned to so horrible a slavery, in a land of freedom. But what was the excess of my astonishment, my terror, and my pity, when I was given to understand, that the titles, on which the monks founded their usurpation, were evidently the ancient works of forgers; that it was only necessary to have eyes to be convinced of this; that in more than one country, the people, called Benedictines, Bernardines, Premontreans, had committed frequently the crime of forgery, and had employed religion to exterminate all the rights of nature.

One of the advocates who had stood up for these unfortunate people, and who had saved poor Mermet from the fangs of rapacity, came up at this time, and gave me a very necessary and instructive book, intitled, "A Dissertation on the Abbey of St. Claudius, its Chronicles, its Legends, its Charters, its Usurpations, and the Rights of the People of that Country."

I dismissed my parishioners. I read with great attention this work, which all our judges, and those who love truth, I doubt not, have perused with profit.

I was soon shocked at the quantity of supposed charters, and the prodigious number of forged acts detected by the learned and pious chancellor of Aguesseau, and before him by Launoy, Baillet, and Dumoulin.

I saw, with the grieved spirit of piety, incensed at having been deceived by errors, that all the legends of St. Claudius were no other than a heap of the grossest impositions, invented, as Baillet says, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I saw that the diplomas of the emperor Charlemagne, of the emperor Lothaire, of Louis the blind, who called himself the king of Provence, of the emperor Frederic I. of the emperor Charles IV, and of Sigismund, his son, were as contemptible impostures as the golden legend.

It

It was, moreover, on these falsehoods, so contemptible in the eyes of the learned, but so punishable in those of justice, that the monks of St. Claudius have founded their wealth, their usurpation, and the slavery of the unhappy people, of whom Providence has made me the pastor.

The tyrants of these unhappy people have not degenerated from their predecessors. They have mutilated and falsified an arret of the parliament of Besançon, given on the 12th of December, 1679, between them and a Sr. Boiffette, for this same mortmain. They have presumed lately to assert, in print, that they gained that process, although the register declares that they were condemned. This is the same process that brings at this day against them fresh proofs. They have been forgers in the twelfth century—they are so in the eighteenth. They lie in the face of justice.

Passing, in a moment, from surprise to indignation, I saw, in fine, that a very small number of monks had succeeded in reducing to slavery twelve thousand citizens, twelve thousand subjects of the king, twelve thousand men useful to the state, to whom they had solemnly sold the property of the same lands, in which they enchain them at this day. Every line filled me with sorrow and affright, and I am fully persuaded that our judges, as well as every reader, feel the same sentiments as I did.

What! said I to myself, the monks sell to free men the immense territories which they have usurped, by false charters, and afterwards they make slaves of these free men, by abusing their ignorance, by intimidating their consciences, by making them tremble under the yoke of the inquisition, when Franche-Comte, so improperly named Franche, belongs to Spain! Ah! much more right had the people of these territories to impose mortmain on the monks; it is to the incontestible proprietors that the right of mortmain belongs; and in fine, every monk is mortmainable by his nature. He has nothing upon the earth; all his
estate

estate is in Heaven, and the earth belongs to those who have purchased it.

ARTICLE SECOND.

Moved and troubled in all the powers of my soul, I fancied that I saw, during the night, Jesus Christ himself, followed by some of his apostles. All his exterior announced humility and poverty, and he nourished five thousand men in a desert with some loaves and fishes. I fancied that I saw in another desert some Monks, and their Abbé possessing a hundred thousand livres of rent, and enslaving twelve thousand men instead of feeding them.

It appeared to me that Jesus transported himself, in a moment, though on foot, from the desert of Genesareth to that of St. Claudius. He demanded of the Monks why they were so rich, and why they enchained these twelve thousand Gauls. One of the Monks, the Cellarist answered, "Lord, it is because we have made them Christians. We have opened to them the door of Heaven, and we have taken from them earth."

Jesus Christ replied, in these words, "I did not believe that I came upon earth to endure poverty, toil, and hunger, constantly practising humility, and disinterestedness, merely for the purpose of enriching the Monks, at the expence of men."

"Oh!" answers the Cellarist, "things are very much changed, since you and your first disciples were on earth. You were the suffering Church, and we are the triumphant one. It is just that those who triumph should be opulent lords. You appear astonished at our having a hundred thousand livres of rent and slaves. What would you say then if you knew that there were Abbeys which have two or three times more, without having any better titles than ourselves?"

At these words I exclaimed; is there no curb, no check upon earth? must the happy still weigh down

the unfortunate? The thunder at this instant roared, and the vision disappeared.

ARTICLE THIRD.

When I had recovered from my fright, I applied myself to study, with the greatest care, this famous process of twelve thousand Citizens against twenty secular Monks. I saw that these monks had not been elevated to the dignity of Canons before the year 1742. That after this time several canonships had been given to men, who, not having been brought up in the monastic state, had not contracted that hardness of heart, that avidity, and secret hatred against human-kind which is but too often acquired in the convents.

I went, to find one of these gentlemen, after having consulted my parishioners. I told him that I came to procure the means of terminating an odious process. This honest gentleman embraced me. He said, he had always sighed, in secret, in supporting a cause whose only object was to despoil the widow and the orphan. I know well, says he, that if there is justice upon earth, we shall infallibly lose our process. I confess that our titles are false, and that those of our adversaries are authentic. I own that in 1350 John de Chalons, lord of these districts, freed the inhabitants from all mort-main. That in 1390 William de la Baume, abbé of St. Claudius, sold to the same people the remainder of the territory, of which they were then the lawful proprietors; that towards the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Monks of St. Claudius usurped the right of mort-main, on this ignorant and intimidated people, without being able to produce the least title to this pretended right. I know that such a possession, without title, cannot support itself, and that there is no prescription against the rights of nature, strengthened by authentic deeds.

These

These Monks, in whose place I now am, cannot compare themselves to the lawful lords of other districts, subject to mort-main, who have conceded the lands to the cultivators, on condition that if they should die without issue, the lands should revert to the house of the donors. Those lords were respectable benefactors, and these Monks, I own, were oppressors. Those lords, I own, have their titles in legal form, and these Monks have not so. These Monks, insensibly, established mort-main, by saying, towards the end of the sixteenth century, to these poor labourers, "If you wish to preserve yourselves from heresy, be our slaves in the name of God." But the labourers, now more enlightened, tell them at this day, "It is in the name of God that we are free."

I was so affected by these words of this worthy gentleman, that I caught him in my arms, with a tenderness, which his virtue inspired: I said to him, "Oh! impress on the souls of your associates these generous sentiments." Neither you, nor they, are guilty of the frauds, which were committed in the past ages. Men must become more just, in proportion as they become more learned. Separate, therefore, your virtues from the prevarications of your predecessors. There frequently is wanted but one good man to lead back from error, a whole Chapter. Convert yours. They will gain by it. They will evade an odious process that will expose them to public hatred, and shame, even if they gain it. Induce them to agree with the labourers; to abandon the horrid right of imposing servitude, so misbecoming in priests; to renounce this fatal pretension, for rights more humane, for the augmentation of revenue. Many lords of territory have already set them this example.

"The Marquis de Choiseul le Baume came to enfranchise his vassals in his estates. M. de Villefrancon, counsellor of parliament, the advocate de Verré, and some others, whose names I am in possession of, have had the same generosity. The Farmers-general, affected with an action so noble, have shared in the honour.

They have refused the right of insinuation, which is their due, and which is very considerable. What has been the consequence? They have all profited by it. Their benevolence has been rewarded without their having hoped for any recompence. The hands that were freed have cultivated, with more industry, the lands. The rents and revenues have increased in proportion to the fruits; the sales have been frequent; the circulation abundant; life is restored in the habitation of death.

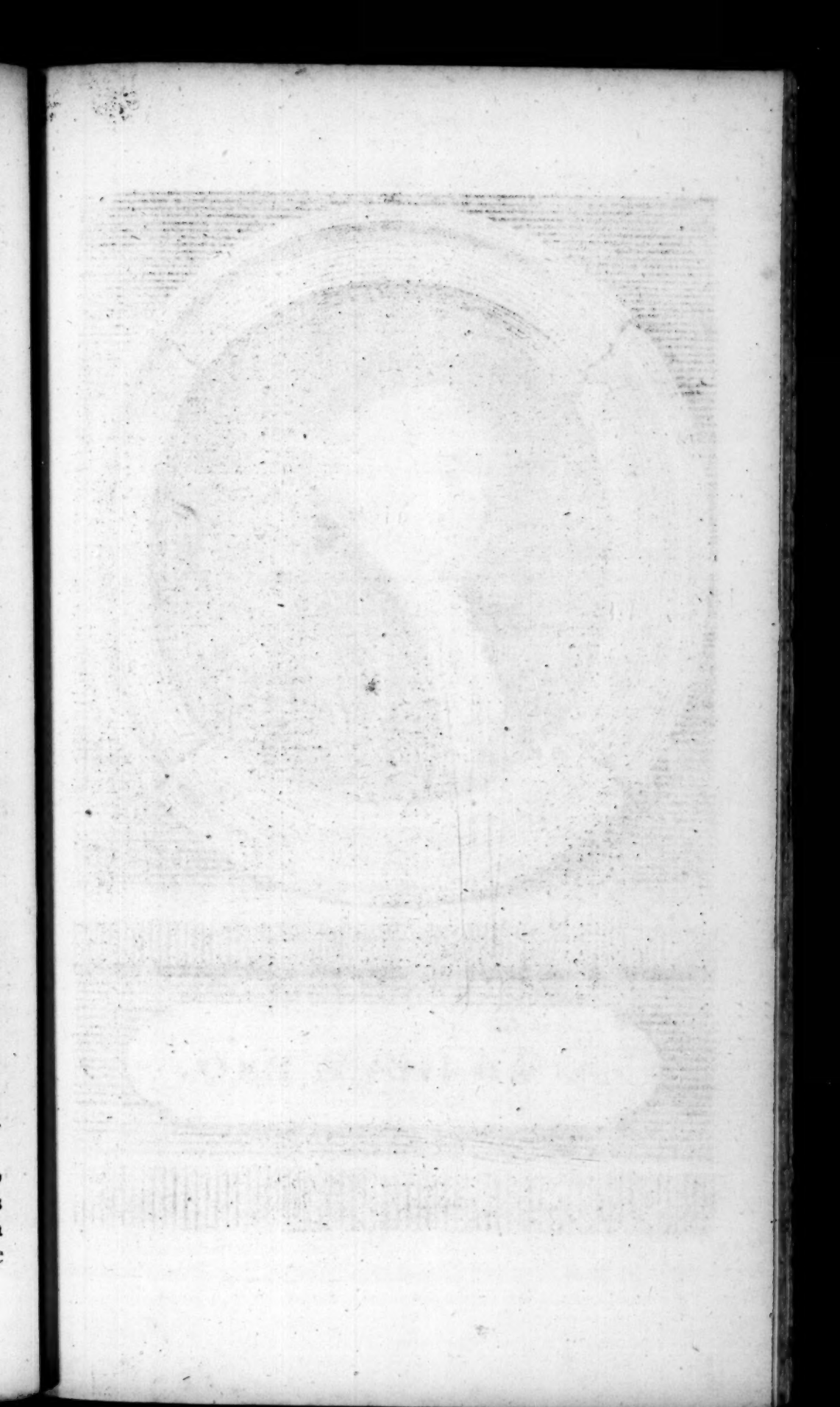
"Observe," continued I, "the king of Sardinia has enfranchised all the slaves of Savoy, and this Savoy, of which the name was the proverb of poverty, has become flourishing."

"Shew these great examples to your associates; enrich them by their grandeur of soul. Propose particularly to their solicitor this honourable arrangement; he knows well that their cause is bad. The body of advocates think nobly. The quality of arbitrators is more worthy of them, than that of defenders of a bad cause."

The Canon was transported with my proposition; he repaired to his associates. Those who had not been Monks hearkened to him with pleasure; those who had refused him with severity. He returned to me, sighing, Oh! says he, "there is but one indelible character in "the world, and it is that of a Monk."

We must, therefore, try the cause—those who will not be advised must be exposed. The tribunals must constantly decide the processes of the monks, and what a process will this be! On one side three thousand useful families, comprehending at least twelve thousand heads, reclaim with tears, and with the titles of their liberty in their hands, the property of their deserts and their hovels, which they bought and paid for; the rights which are incontestible before all the tribunals upon earth.

On the other side there are twenty useless men, who say, that in spite of reason, these three thousand families are their slaves, because they existed at one time, in
these





DAVID HUME ESQ.

these mountains, certain forgers of title deeds, though very unskilful in their trade.

If our religion, which in its beginning knew not of Monks, and which, as soon as they appeared, restricted them from all enjoyment of property, and prescribed to them a law of charity, and indigence, is silent in the mountains and the dells of Mont Jura, Oh! holy justice! sister of this religion, make your sovereign voice be heard—dictate your arrets when the evangelist is forgotten, and when nature is trodden under foot!

A
L E T T E R
T O
M R. D A V I D H U M E.

I HAVE seen, Sir, the pieces that have been published in the process, which you have to support, before the tribunal of the public, against the man whom you protected. I own that the great soul of Jean-Jacques hath brought, into open day, the blackness with which you have heaped favour upon favour, and it is in vain, that they say it is the process of ingratitude against benevolence.

I find myself implied in this affair. The Sieur Rousseau accuses me of having written, in England, a letter in which I laugh at him. He hath accused M. d'Alembert of the same crime.

Although M. d'Alembert and I might be capable of this enormity in our hearts, I swear to you that I am not the man who has written about him. It is seven years since I have had that honour. I know not the letter, of which he speaks; and I declare to you that if

I had written any mischievous pleasantries, at the expense of M. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, I would not disavow them.

He has done me the honour to place me among the number of his enemies and persecutors. Fully persuaded that they ought to raise a statue to him, as it is said in the very polite and decent "letter of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, citizen of Geneva, to Christopher de Beaumont, archbishop of Paris." He fancies that one half of the universe, are employed in raising this statue, on the pedestal; and the other half in throwing it down.

He not only believed me to be an Iconoclast, but he also imagined that I had conspired against him with the council of Geneva, to procure a decree of imprisonment, against his person, and afterwards with the council of Berne, to drive him from Switzerland.

He persuaded the protectors, that he then had at Paris, of these things, and made me appear, in their eyes, as a man who persecuted him on account of his modesty and wisdom. Now be pleased to observe the manner, Sir, in which I have persecuted him.

When I saw that he had many enemies at Paris; that, like myself, he was fond of retirement; and presuming that he could render some services to philosophy, I proposed to him, by Mark Chapuis, citizen of Geneva, in the year 1759, to come and live in a country house, called, The Hermitage, which I purchased for the purpose.

He was so affected with my offer that he wrote me these words:

" Sir,

" I do not like you. You corrupt my republic, by giving exhibitions in your castle of Tournay, &c."

This letter on the part of a man, who had himself written a serious opera and a comedy, was not yet dated from Bedlam. I made no answer, as you may readily believe. I intreated M. Tronchin, the physician, to send him a recipe for the malady. M. Tronchin told

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me, that as he could not cure me of the madness of writing dramatical pieces at my age, he despaired of curing Jean-Jacques. We both remain in the disease, each in his way.

In 1762 the council of Geneva undertook his cure, and issued a kind of an order to detain him for the purpose of applying the remedies. Jean-Jacques, under a decree both at Paris and Geneva, and convinced that one body could not be in two places at the same time, fled to a third. He concluded with his usual prudence that I was his mortal enemy, since I had not answered his obliging letter. He supposed that a party of the council of Geneva had come to dine with me, to consult his ruin, and that the minute of his arret had been written on my table, at the close of the repast. He persuaded some of his fellow citizens of this improbable story. This accusation became so serious, that I was obliged to write, to the council of Geneva, a very strong letter; in which I said that if any one man of the body had spoken to me, at any time, of the smallest design against the Sr. Rousseau, I agreed that he should consider both him, and me as rascals; and that I detested persecutors too much to be one.

The council answered me, by a secretary of state, that I never had, nor ought to have, nor could have the smallest share, either directly or indirectly, in the condemnation of Sr. Jean-Jacques.

The two letters are in the archives of the council of Geneva.

In the mean time, M. Rousseau, who had retired into the delicious valleys of Moutier-Travers, or Môtiers-Travers, in the county of Neufchatel, not having had for a number of years, the pleasure of communicating under the two hopes, demanded instantly of the preacher of Moutiers-Travers, a man of a refined, and delicate turn of mind, the consolation of being admitted to the holy table: he told him that his intention was, "First, to combat the Roman church: Secondly, to wrestle with the infernal working of the spirit," which

“ which evidently established materialism ; and, thirdly, to overcome the vanities and presumptions of the “ modern philosophers.” He wrote and signed this declaration, and it is yet in the hands of M. de Montmolin, preacher of Moutier-Travers and Boveresse.

When he had communicated, he perceived his heart to be dilated, he felt it to be drowned in tears. He says so, at least, in his letter of August 8, 1765.

He suddenly quarrelled with the preacher and the people of Moutier-Travers and Boveresse. The little boys and girls threw stones at him. He fled to the territory of Berne, and not wishing to be stoned again, he supplicated the council of Berne “ to have the goodness to shut him up, for the remainder of his days, in “ some one of their castles, or other place, that they “ might be pleased to appoint.” This letter is dated October 20, 1765.

After the countess of Pinchbeck, who advised them to shut her up, I did not believe it would ever enter into the mind of any one, to make such a request. The gentlemen of Berne chose rather to drive him away, than to take upon themselves his lodging.

The judicious Jean-Jacques did not fail to conclude that it was I, who had deprived him of the sweet consolation of perpetual imprisonment ; and even that I had so much credit with the priests, as to procure him to be excommunicated by the Christians of Moutier-Travers and Boveresse.

Do not think I jest, Sir. He wrote in a letter of the 24th of June, 1765, “ To be excommunicated by “ means of M. de Voltaire will amuse me much.” And in his letter of the 23d of March, he says, “ M. de “ Voltaire ought to have written to Paris, that he has “ been able to drive me from my new country.”

The best part of the affair is, that he has been able from time to time, to convince some people of all this. And yet the truth is, that, if he had been inclined, instead of the prison which he requested from the gentlemen of Berne, to have taken refuge in the country

try house, which I offered him, I would have made him a present of this asylum, where I would have taken care, that he should be becomingly provided with every necessary, and comfort of life; persuaded that a man of his temper merits much more of compassion than resentment.

It is true, that, to the wisdom which we constantly find in his writings, he has joined traits which are not the features of a good heart. I know not whether you are acquainted, that he is the author of the letters of la Montagne. In the fifth letter he stands forth formally an accuser of me: this is not becoming. A man who hath communicated under the two hopes—a sage to whom a statue ought to be raised, appears to degrade his character a little by such a manoeuvre: he hazards his life and his reputation.

Thus, the first thing that the mediators of France, Zurich and Berne, did, was to declare solemnly the letters of Montagne, to be an infamous libel. It was no more possible for me to offer a house to Jean-Jacques, after his name was affixed on the corner, as a calumniator.

But though he followed the trade of an accuser, and that of a man a little embroiled with truth, it must be owned that he has constantly preserved his character of modesty.

He did me the honour to write to me, after the mediation had arrived at Geneva, these words:

“ Sir,

“ If you have said, that I was not secretary to the
“ ambassador at Venice, you have lied; and if I have
“ not enjoyed its honours, it is I who have lied.”

I was ignorant that Jean-Jacques had been secretary to the embassy. I never had spoken a syllable about it, because I never had heard it spoken of.

I shewed this agreeable letter to a respectable gentleman, conductor of foreign affairs, curious, and exact.
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Such men are very dangerous to those who speak at random. He dug up the original letters, written with the hand of Jean-Jacques, on the 9th and 13th of August, 1743, to M. de Theil, first commissioner of foreign affairs, who was then his protector, and he found in them these words.

“ I have been two years the domestic of the Count de Montagne, ambassador ; I have eaten his bread ; he hath driven me, shamefully, from his house ; he has threatened to throw me out of the window ; and worse, if I remain any longer in Venice, &c. &c.”

Observe how little the secretary of an ambassador is respected ; observe the pride of a great mind a little contracted. I advise him to have engraved, at the foot of his statue, the ambassador's words to his secretary.

You see, Sir, that this poor man has never been able to maintain himself under any master, nor to preserve any friend ; since it is against the dignity of his being, to have a master, and that friendship is a weakness, whose impressions a wise man ought to repel.

You say that he has written the history of his life. It has been very useful to the world, and full of very great events, and I hope he will do posterity the service to publish them. His taste for truth will not permit him to disguise the smallest part of those anecdotes, to serve for the education of princes, who wish, like Emilius, to be joiners.

In truth, Sir, all these little unhappy creatures deserve not to engross but a minute of our attention. They quickly fall into eternal oblivion. The follies of Jean-Jacques and his ridiculous pride, will do no injury to true philosophy, and the respectable men who cultivate it in France, England, and Germany will not be the less esteemed.

There are follies and quarrels in all the conditions of life. Some Ex-jesuits have furnished the bishops with defamatory libels, under the name of mandates. The parliaments have burnt them. They have been forgot
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at the end of fifteen days. All things pass rapidly, like the grotesque figures of a magic lanthorn.

The archbishop of Novorogod, at the head of a synod, hath condemned the bishop of Rostou to be degraded, and shut up for the remainder of his life, in a convent, for having maintained that there are two powers, the sacerdotal and the royal. The empress hath enlarged the bishop of Rostou from the convent. This anecdote hath hardly been known in Germany, and the rest of Europe.

The histories of wars, the most bloody, perish with the soldiers, who have been the victims. The criticisms even of theatrical pieces, and above all, their panegyrics, are quickly buried in the same grave with the pieces themselves, and with the periodical papers which speak of them. Nothing but the sugar-plumbs of St. Keyser are remembered.

In this immense torrent, which bears us along, and which swallows us up, what shall we do? let us observe the council which Mr. Horace Walpole gives to Jean-Jacques—"to be wise and happy. You are the one, "Sir, and you deserve to be the other, &c. &c."

Ferney, October 24, 1766.

THOUGHTS

T H O U G H T S
O N
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

I.

PUFFENDORF, and those who write, like him, on the interests of princes, make defective almanacks for the current year, which are absolutely worth nothing the year following.

II.

Who would have said, at the peace of Nimeguen, that, one day, Spain, Mexico, Peru, Naples, Sicily, and Parma, would belong to the house of France?

III.

Was it foreseen, when Charles XII. governed Sweden so despotically, that his successors would have no more authority than the kings of Poland?

IV.

The kings of Denmark were Doges, a century ago, and now they are absolute.

V.

At one time, the Russians sold themselves like negroes. At present, they esteem themselves so much that they will not receive, into their armies, foreign soldiers; and
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it is a point of honour, with them, not to desert. But they are obliged to have foreign officers, because they have not acquired skill, in proportion to their courage, and because they only know how to obey.

VI.

Animals accustomed to the yoke present themselves to it. A compiler of the letters of queen Christina hath done an outrage to human nature, in justifying the murder of Monaldesqui, who was assassinated at Fontainbleau, by order of a Swedish woman, under pretext of this Swedish woman having been queen. No persons upon earth but the assassins, employed by herself, could pretend, that it was lawful, for this princess to do at Fontainbleau, what would have been a crime at Stockholm.

VII.

That government would be worthy of the Hottentots, in which it would be lawful for a certain number of men to say, "It is the duty of those who labour, to pay; we owe nothing, because we are idle."

VIII.

That government would outrage God and man, in which the citizens could say, "The state hath given us all, and we owe it nothing, but our prayers."

IX.

Reason, in her progress towards perfection, destroyed the tribe of religious wars. The spirit of philosophy hath banished the plague from their world.

X.

If Luther and Calvin were to return to the world, they would make no more noise than the Scotists and the Thomists: why? they were born in a time when men but began to be enlightened.

XI. It

XI.

It is only in the times of barbarity that we see forcerers, men possessed with devils, kings excommunicated, and subjects relieved from their oaths of fidelity, by priests.

XII.

Nothing is more useless to the world, in all respects, than a convent which enjoys two hundred thousand livres of rent. Reason demonstrates, that if these two hundred thousand livres were given to a hundred officers, when they married; there would be a hundred valuable citizens rewarded, a hundred females provided for, and four hundred persons, at least added to the state, at the end of ten years, instead of fifty persons lost in sloth and idleness. It shews, also, that these fifty idlers, restored again to their country, would cultivate the earth, people it, and that there would be more labourers and soldiers. This too is what all the world desire, from the prince, to the husbandman. Superstition only hath opposed it; but reason, leagued with faith, ought to crush superstition.

XIII.

The prince could, at least, restrain his subjects, by a single word, from taking the oaths, before they were twenty-five years of age; and if any one should say to the sovereign, "what will become of our young ladies of distinction, whom we usually sacrifice for the sake of the first-born?" the prince would answer: "They shall become what they are in Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, England, and Holland; they shall become citizens. They were born to propagate, and not to recite Latin that they do not understand. A woman who nourishes two infants, and who spins, renders more service to her country, than all the convents, put together, have ever done."

XIV. It

XIV.

It is a great happiness to the prince, and state, when there are philosophers, who imprint these maxims on the minds of men.

XV.

Philosophers not having any particular interest, cannot speak, but in favour of reason, and the public good.

XVI.

Philosophers love religion; and they render great service to princes, by destroying superstition, which is always the enemy of princes.

XVII.

It was superstition that assassinated Henry III. Henry IV. William, prince of Orange, and so many others. It is that which hath made the rivers flow with blood, ever since the days of Constantine.

XVIII.

Superstition is the most horrible enemy of mankind. When she governs the prince, she prevents him from doing good to his people; when she governs the people, she stirs them up against the prince.

XIX.

There is not one example upon earth of philosophers who opposed the laws of the prince. There is not one age, in which superstition, and enthusiasm have not been the cause of troubles, horrid in their nature.

XX.

Liberty consists in being dependant on nothing but the laws. On this ground, every man is, at this moment, free in Sweden, England, Holland, Switzerland, at Geneva, and Hamburgh; it is the same at Venice and at Genoa. But yet there are provinces and vast Christian realms, where the greatest part of men are slaves.

XXI. A

XXI.

A time will come, in this country, when some prince, more able than the others, will make the cultivators of the land comprehend, that it is not for their advantage that a man who has a horse or many horses, that is to say, who is a nobleman, should have a right to kill a peasant by paying ten crowns for his grave. It is true that ten crowns are enough for a man, born in a certain climate. But they discover, in a length of time, that the sum is too little for a death. Then he may be able to make the commons a part of the government, and the English and Swedish constitution may be established in the neighbourhood of Turkey.

XXII.

A citizen of Amsterdam is a man; a citizen, at a few degrees of longitude distant from thence, is a beast of burthen.

XXIII.

All men are born equal; but a burgher of Maroc does not suspect that this truth exists.

XXIV.

This equality is not the annihilation of subordination; we are equally men, but not all equal members of society. All natural rights belong equally to the Sultan and the Boftange. Both the one and the other ought to dispose, with the same power, of their persons, their families, and their fortunes. Men are, therefore, essentially equal, although they play, on the theatre of life, different parts.

XXV.

It is constantly demanded what government is preferable. If you ask the question of a minister or his deputy, he certainly answers you in favour of absolute

lute power; if you ask a baron, he wishes that the peerage had a share in the legislative power. The citizen wishes, and with reason, to be consulted; and the husbandman thinks he ought not to be forgotten. The best government appears to be that where all conditions are equally protected by the laws.

XXVI.

A republican is always more attached to his country than a subject is to his, and for this reason, the former loves his fortune better than the latter does his master.

XXVII.

Who is the lover of his country? A man composed of self-love and prejudices, which the good of society have exalted into the greatest and first principle. This vague word, the public, makes a profound impression.

XXVIII.

When the lord of a castle, or the inhabitant of a city, accuse absolute power, and lament the oppression of the peasant, do not believe them. We hardly bewail the evils which we do not feel. Citizens and gentlemen very rarely hate the person of their sovereign, at least this has not frequently been their object in civil wars. That which they hate, is absolute power in the fourth or fifth hand; it is the antichamber of a deputy, or of the secretary of an intendant, which causes the murmurs. It is because they have received, in a palace, the rebuff of an insolent valet, that they groan over the desolated country.

XXIX.

The English reproach the French with serving their masters with gaiety. The following, as has been already observed, is among the best pieces that have been written in England, on this subject:

A nation here I pity, and admire,
 Whom noblest sentiments of glory fire:
 Yet taught by custom's force, and bigot fear,
 To serve with pride, and boast the yoke they bear;
 Whose nobles, born to cringe, and to command,
 In courts a mean, in camps a generous band,
 From priests, and stock-jobbers, content, receive
 Those laws, their dreaded arms to Europe give:
 Whose people, vain in want; in bondage, blest;
 Tho' plunder'd, gay; industrious, tho' oppress'd;
 With happy follies rise above their fate,
 The jest, and envy of each wiser state.

There is an answer to all these declamations with which English poesy, pamphlets, and sermons are full. It is very natural to love a house which hath reigned almost eight hundred years. Many strangers, and of these, even Englishmen, have come to establish themselves in France, merely for the purpose of living happily.

XXX.

A king who is not spoken against, and reviled, can hardly be wicked.

XXXI.

Some Englishmen, who have never stirred from London, fancy that a king of France, when he has leisure, may send for a president, and, to amuse himself, may give his fortune to one of his valets.

XXXII.

There is scarcely a country in the universe where the fortunes of individuals are better protected than they are in France. The Count Maurice de Nassau, in departing from the Hague, to command the Dutch infantry,

fantry, asked me if they would confiscate the rents which he had from the Hotel-de Ville, of Paris. "They will be paid to you," said I, "precisely on the same day, that the count Maurice de Saxe, who commands the French army, shall receive his," and this was verified to the letter.

XXXIII.

Louis XI. during his reign, dispatched by the hands of the hangman, about forty thousand citizens. This happened because he was not absolute, and because he wished to be so. Louis XIV. after the adventure of the duke of Laufen, banished but one person from his court. This happened because he was absolute. Under Charles II. there were more than fifty considerable men beheaded in London.

XXXIV.

In the time of Louis XIII. not one year passed without factions. Louis, the just, was cruel. He began to reign at eleven years of age, by causing his first minister to be assassinated. He suffered the cardinal de Richlieu, more cruel than himself, to make the burning pile flow with blood.

The cardinal Mazarin, in the same situation, did not massacre one person. Foreigner though he was, he did not support himself by cruelty. He was crafty, not wicked. If Richlieu had not had factions to combat, he would have raised the kingdom to a high point of splendor, because his cruelty, which held very great place in his character, not having on whom to exercise itself, would have left his noble genius to act in its full force.

XXXV.

In a book full of profound ideas, and ingenious fallies, despotism is accounted among the natural forms of government. The author, who is very pleasant, meant nothing more than a joke.

There is not one state despotic in its nature. There is not one country where a people has said to one man, "Sire, we give, to your gracious Majesty, the power of taking from us our wives, our children, our fortunes, and our lives; and to impale us, agreeable to your good pleasure, and adorable caprice."

The grand Turk swears on the Alcoran to observe the laws. He cannot deliver over any one person to death without an arret of the Divan, and a Feshti of a Muphti. He is so little despotic, that he can neither change the standard of the coin, nor disband the Janissaries. It is false that he is the master of the fortunes of his subjects. He makes gifts, indeed, of lands called the timariots, as in former times, fiefs were bestowed.

XXXVI.

Despotism is the abuse of royalty, as anarchy is that of republicanism. A Sultan, who, without the forms of justice, and without justice, imprisons or condemns to death, the citizens of his country, is a highway robber, to whom the appellation is given of "your highness."

XXXVII.

A modern author hath said that there is most virtue in a republic and most honour in a monarchy.

Honour is the desire of being honoured. To have honour is to be worthy of possessing it. We do not say that a recluse has honour. It is reserved for the degree of esteem, that, in society, every one wishes to attach to his person. It is necessary to agree on certain terms, without which, we should quickly be unable to understand one another.

But, in the time of the Roman republic, this desire of being honoured by statues, crowns of laurel, and triumphs rendered the Romans vanquishers of the greatest part of the world. Honour subsisted in a ceremony, in a sprig of laurel, or a blade of parsley.

Where

Where there is no republic, there is no more of this species of honour.

XXXVIII.

A republic is not founded on virtue. It is on the ambition of every citizen, which restrains the ambition of others; on the pride, which depresses pride; on the desire of governing, which will not suffer another to govern. From this, they form to themselves laws which preserve the equality as much as it is possible. It is a society where guests of equal appetite eat at the same table, till there comes a voracious and a vigorous man, who takes all the viands to himself, and leaves the plates to them.

XXXIX.

Little machines do not succeed in the main; because the force of friction deranges their parts. It is the same with states. China could not be governed like the republic of Lucca.

XL.

Calvinism and Lutheranism are in danger in Germany. This country is full of great bishopricks, sovereign abbeys, and canonships, all calculated for conversion. A protestant prince may turn a Catholic to be a bishop or king of a certain country, as a princess may, to gain a husband.

XLI.

If the Roman religion recovers the above, it will be owing to the allurements of the immense benefices, and be accomplished by means of the Monks. The Monks are the troops that are incessantly at war. The Protestants have no soldiers.

XLII. It

XLII.

It has been pretended that religions are adapted to climates. But Christianity reigned a long time in Asia. It began in Palestine, and it is arrived to Norway. The Englishman, who said, that religions born in Asia, die in England, reasoned better.

XLIII.

It must be confessed, that there are ceremonies, and mysteries which cannot have place in certain climates. They bathe themselves in the Ganges at the new moons. Were they obliged to bathe themselves, in the month of January, in the Vistula, this act of devotion would not long be attended to, &c.

XLIV.

It has been pretended that the law of Mahomet, which prohibits the use of wine, is the law of the climate of Arabia, because wine, in that country, coagulates the blood, and that water is refreshing.

I should have been as well pleased if they had made an eleventh commandment in Spain and Italy, to drink to excess.

Mahomet did not prohibit the use of wine, because the Arabs loved water. It is said in the Sonna, that he prohibited it, because he was a witness of the excesses to which drunkenness gives rise.

XLV.

All religious laws are not suited to the nature of the climate.

To eat, standing, a lamb, boiled with lettices, to throw what remains into the fire; not to eat a rabbit, because it has not a cleft foot, and that it ruminates; to sprinkle the blood of an animal on the left ear; all these ceremonies can hardly have relation to the temperature of a climate.

XLVI. IF

XLVI.

If Leo X. had given indulgencies to the Augustine Monks to sell, who were in possession of this traffic, there would have been no Protestants. If Anne Bullen had not been beautiful, England would have continued a Catholic country. To what was it owing that Spain was not wholly Arian, and afterwards Mahometan? To what was it owing that Carthage did not destroy Rome?

XLVII.

From a given event to deduce all the events of the universe, is an excellent problem to resolve—but the Master of the universe alone can accomplish it.

F I N I S.

XLVI

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